PREFACE

Throughout the nineteenth century Great Britain was the dominant world power, ruling over an empire comprising almost one quarter of the earth's land surface. Her strength lay in her control of the seas which had been acquired by Nelson, at Trafalgar, in 1805. This control was maintained down to 1914, although it began to be seriously challenged by Germany after the turn of twentieth century, and from 1904 to 1914 naval problems formed the key to Anglo-German relations.

Britain maintained her sea supremacy throughout the nineteenth century, particularly the years from 1850 to 1900, largely because there was no formidable naval power capable of opposing her. Had there been, Britain would indeed have been in dire straits for her navy was antiquated. The Royal Navy existed -- but after 1850 not as a really efficient force, because it failed to keep abreast of the modern naval developments. It is true that the total British fleet comprised many ships and men, but the officers were poorly trained, and the entire naval service was very inefficient and poorly organized. In short, lethargy had permeated every corner, progress was something to be strictly avoided, and all defence worries were banished by the placing of blind faith in a naval service which itself was content to do little more than rest

upon the laurels given to it during the Napoleonic Wars.

The present Royal Navy, as the two world wars of the twentieth century have proved, is a powerful, efficient service. This modern navy is primarily the work of one man -- Sir John Fisher -- for it was he who laid the foundation upon which his successors have built. Tennyson once wrote -- "England's fleet is her all in all, and in her fleet her fate". This was the essence of Fisher's thought, and he was determined to provide a navy which could adequately perform all the services required of it. His opportunity came in 1904 and though his stay in power was short, it could hardly have been more productive of beneficial effects however much longer he had remained in office.

This essay is a study of seven years of the life of this remarkable individual. He was not a popular man -- but he was a great man, without whom the history of Britain might well have been much different. Fisher was a controversial figure in his own day and to some extent remains so today, but it will remain forever to his credit that he gave the Royal Navy reform and leadership at a time when it was most urgently needed. His innovations have not remained unchanged but he did infuse into the Royal Navy its modern 'spirit', which in so conservative an institution was no mean feat.

University of Alberta

Sir John Fisher 1902 to 1909

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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Major events in the life of Sir John Fisher, to 1910.

1841 - January 25	-	Born in Ceylon. He was the elder son of Captain William Fisher, of the 78th Highlanders and 95th Foot, by his wife, Sophia, daughter of Alfred Lambe of London.
1854 - July 13	-	Fisher entered the Royal Navy on a nomination from Admiral Sir William Parker.
1859 - 1860	-	served in China on the Highflyer. He was later transferred to the Furious and promoted to acting lieutenant, which was confirmed in November, 1860.
1863	-	joined the Warrior, the first British 'ironclad'.
1864 - 1869	-	served on the staff of the Excellent, and in 1869 was promoted to commander.
1869 - 1872	-	served in the China station.
1872 - 1876	-	served on the staff of the Excellent, and was promoted to captain in 1874.
	-	in 1876 he served on an Admiralty torpedo committee.
1877 - 1882	-	served at sea.
1883 - 1886	-	captain of the gunnery school at Portsmouth.

1886 - 1890	-	Director of Ordnance at the Admiralty.
	-	promoted to rear-admiral in 1890.
1891	-	superintendent of the Portsmouth dock-yards.
1892 - 1895	-	Third Sea Lord and Controller.
	-	received K.C.B. in 1894.
1896	-	promoted to vice-admiral.
1897 - 1899	-	C.-in-C. of the North America and West Indies Station.
1899 - 1902	-	British naval delegate to the First Hague Peace Conference in 1899.
	-	C.-in-C. in the Mediterranean.
	-	promoted to admiral in 1901.
	-	received the G.C.B. at King Edward's coronation in August, 1902.
1902 - 1903	-	Second Sea Lord.
- December 25 (1902)	-	Selborne Training Scheme promulgated.
1903 - 1904	-	C.-in-C. at Portsmouth.
1904 - October 21	-	First Sea Lord and Aide-de-Camp to King Edward.
- December	-	Selborne Memorandum.
1905 - October	-	keel of the <u>Dreadnought</u> laid.
1906 - February	-	<u>Dreadnought</u> launched.
- October	-	<u>Dreadnought</u> underwent sea trials.
	-	a new fleet reorganization was announced.

1907 - March	-	fleet reorganization undertaken.
1908	-	received G.C.V.O.
1909	-	Parliamentary inquiry into Admiralty policy.
- November 9	-	raised to the peerage as Baron Fisher of Kilverstone.
1910 - January 25	-	retired as First Sea Lord.

ABBREVIATIONS

P.D. - Parliamentary Debates.

Nineteenth Century - The Nineteenth Century and After.

M.V.B. - M.V. Brett, son of Viscount Esher.

Other abbreviations have been noted in the text.

NOTE:

1. The term Sea Lords has been used throughout when referring to naval members of the Board of Admiralty, in place of Naval Lords which was the correct term until 1904.
2. Permission was received from Mr. C.B. Tunstall, University of London, to quote freely from his unpublished notes. All such quotations have been so acknowledged.
3. References to articles by J.S. Corbett in the Monthly Review of March, and September, 1902, contain no page numbers as these articles were typed and kindly forwarded by Mr. C.B. Tunstall of the University of London.

4. The contents of Chapter I, 'Anglo-German Naval Rivalry' might have been better placed elsewhere in the essay, but it has been placed at the beginning so as to provide an introduction to the antagonisms that arose between Britain and Germany over naval matters.

CHAPTER I

ANGLO-GERMAN NAVAL RIVALRY

Germany, as a modern nation-state, was late in appearing on the European political scene. She came at a time when the major powers, especially Britain and France, were busily engaged in trying to satisfy their imperialistic aims, either by grabbing more territory or by attempting to consolidate their hold on what they already nominally possessed. Germany, emerging only in 1870, missed out on all the great colonial schemes, owing in part at least to the fact that Bismarck[1] was more interested in providing security for the growth of German nationalism than in the acquisition of colonies. Once Bismarck was removed from the political scene, however, his place was taken by the Emperor Wilhelm II[2], who was to dominate European politics for nearly twenty years prior to World War I. This was so because Wilhelm was determined that both he and Germany had a right to a 'place in the sun'. The difficulty was, however, that creating for Germany a place of pre-eminence in the world of nations required at least

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[1] Otto von Bismarck, 1815 to 1898.
Prussian Delegate to the Frankfurt Diet 1850 to 1859; Ambassador to Paris 1862; Minister of Foreign Affairs 1862 to 1871; Chancellor 1871 to 1890.

[2] Wilhelm II, 1859 to 1941.
Emperor of Germany 1888 to 1918.

the diplomatic skill of a Bismarck. Wilhelm was no Bismarck, even though he thought of himself as such.

The rise of the German Navy was only a matter of time, and it would have come even if Tirpitz[3] had been absent from the scene. Germany, after 1870, replaced France as the leading continental power. She was expanding rapidly in the fields of industry and commerce, and then moved into the colonial sphere, but she suffered from frustration because in whatever direction she turned she encountered the British flag. Rivaling Britain in the economic field, being the supreme land power and interested in expansion, it is not surprising that the Emperor desired a fleet. Germany's future, proclaimed Wilhelm, 'lay on the water', and he was determined to construct the means whereby Germany would find her destiny. Germany certainly had need of a fleet, but in carrying out her naval policy in a way almost designed to antagonize Britain, the bounds of wisdom were over-stepped.

Wilhelm required someone with a forceful personality in order to have any navy scheme pushed through the Reichstag, and he could hardly have wished for anyone better than Tirpitz. Tirpitz was appointed Secretary of the Reichsmarineamt in

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[3]Alfred von Tirpitz, 1849 to 1930.
Secretary of the Navy 1897; Minister of State for Prussia 1898; Lord High Admiral 1911.

1897[4], and in the same year he put forth proposals advocating the construction of a 'risk fleet'[5], this being a fleet large enough to deter any other power from attacking Germany. The result was the Navy Bill of 1898 calling for the construction of eleven battleships, five first-class cruisers, and seventeen smaller cruisers, by 1905.[6] This meant too that the naval budget was fixed for a seven year period and therefore was out of the control of the Reichstag. This is in marked contrast to the British system where the Navy Estimates must be voted annually. The new German Fleet aroused very few fears since ostensibly it was for defensive purposes, but fears arose as to the aggressive character of the fleet when, following the new Navy Bill of 1900, further expansion was mooted in 1903 to 1904, and was officially approved in 1906, 1907, and 1908.[7] Support for the new navy scheme came from

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[4]E.L. Woodward, Great Britain and the German Navy, (Oxford, 1935), p. 19.
The Reichmarineamt was the administrative section of the German Navy. The Executive Command was under the Oberkommando, which was later abolished by Tirpitz and replaced by a Naval General Staff.

[5]The original idea of a 'risk fleet' has been traced to an article by Captain Baron von Luttwitz who stressed that the German Navy need not be equal to all opponents, but strong enough to act as a deterrent.
See W.D. Puleston, Mahan, (London, 1939), p. 129.

[6]W.L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, (New York, 1935, 2 V.) V.II, 434.

[7]K.S. Pinson, Modern Germany, (New York, 1954), p. 300.

the German Navy League, founded in 1898, and backed by Krupp funds and the Imperial patronage.[8] Like all such patriotic bodies it became dangerous by consistently advocating an increase in the size of the fleet.

Tirpitz said, as early as 1898, that the next great naval battle would take place in the North Sea, and that the German fleet had to be strong enough to deter even the English.[9] Fisher too reasoned along these lines and hence his redistribution scheme of 1904. Tirpitz, however, realized just how far behind Germany was, and this, coupled with Wilhelm's obsession over British naval superiority and the wave of Anglophobia which swept over Germany during the Boer War, allowed him to bring forth a new Navy Law in 1900. This followed a few months after the failure of the First Hague Peace Conference[10] which proved to be "only the formal interment of an idea that had died at birth".[11]

The disarmament ideas, as Bülow[12] hoped, were wrecked

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[8]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 27. The British counterpart, The British Navy League was founded in 1894 and performed the same function.

[9]Von Tirpitz, My Memoirs, (New York, 1919, 2V.), V.I, 159 ff.

[10]Held at The Hague from May 18 to July 29, 1899.

[11]W.D. Puleston, op. cit., p. 202.

[12]Von Bülow, 1849 to 1929.
Minister to Rumania 1888; German Ambassador to Italy 1892; Foreign Minister 1893 to 1900; Chancellor 1900 to 1909.

on English objections, and perhaps the greatest benefit from the Conference was derived by Fisher, who said that it was while at The Hague that he "imbibed those ideas as to the North Sea being our next battleground, which led to the great things between 1902 and 1910".[13]

With the passage of the new Navy Law in 1900[14] it was clearly stated for the first time that the German fleet had to be strong enough to cope with England,[15] and the Memorandum appended to the Bill stipulated that the German Empire needed peace at sea so as to guarantee the security of her trade and economic development, but this was not to be "peace at any price, but peace with honor, which satisfies its just requirements".[16]

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[13]Lord Fisher, Records, (New York, 1920), p. 56. Fisher was the chief British naval delegate to The First Hague Peace Conference.

[14]This Law called for a fleet, by 1920, consisting of two flag ships; four squadrons of eight battleships each; eight large cruisers; twenty-four small cruisers; (four battleships, three large and three small cruisers were to form a reserve fleet). Also, there was to be a foreign service fleet of three large and ten small cruisers. However, the Government was forced to drop five large and five small cruisers and to reduce the cruiser reserve by one large and one small cruiser.
See: E.L. Woodward, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

[15]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 28.

[16]A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, German Sea-Power, (London, 1913), p. 346.

There can be no doubt that Germany had large commercial interests and that by 1900 her fleet, neither actual nor proposed, was really commensurate with her merchant marine or her status as a great power. Neither can it be denied that Germany had a moral right to have a fleet, and a fleet as large as she desired, but it was folly for Tirpitz and his kind not to think of the effect of their policy on British public opinion.

Britain did not deny Germany's right to a fleet, and neither was she opposed to German commercial expansion, even if Tirpitz' stock argument was that Britain was jealous of Germany's industrial and commercial expansion and so for protection Germany required a large fleet.[17] Anglo-German relations were strained more by the anti-British stand taken by Germany during the Boer War than by the Navy Law of 1900,[18] and had this Law been final, as was announced, naval problems would probably never have stirred up such animosity between Britain and Germany as that which developed after 1903. However, in January 1902 and following, British opinion towards Germany began to change, and there were signs of alarm when an article printed in Germany indicated that by 1904 to 1905 a

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[17]Tirpitz' views appeared to have received confirmation when, on July 28, 1897, Britain cancelled a commercial treaty that had been concluded with the Zollverein in 1865. See: W.L. Langer, op. cit., V.II, 436 f.

[18]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 48.

further extension would be made in the navy programme. An article appearing in The Times, January 28, 1903, emphasized that a change in the naval situation would certainly be forthcoming as "'Programmes' were becoming 'performances'; Germany was building her fleet with a 'characteristic continuity of purpose'".[19]

Certainly by 1903 influential opinion in Britain had become conscious of the necessity of maintaining supremacy at sea, and if Germany was going to have a large navy Britain was determined to have a larger one, and if Germany had Tirpitz at the naval helm, Britain had Fisher. The stage was set therefore for the drama which began in 1904 and ended at Jutland in 1916.[20] For Germany to say that her fleet was not directed against Britain was unbelievable, for with its concentration in the North Sea and the small coal-bunkers in the ships, there was really no place but the North Sea in which a naval battle could be fought. It was only natural that Germany should build her fleet with the possibility of an Anglo-German conflict in mind, no matter how remote, because there

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[19] Ibid., p. 51.

[20] Battle of Jutland, May 31, 1916.
The greatest naval battle since Trafalgar, fought between the British Grand Fleet under Jellicoe and Beatty, and the German High Seas Fleet under Von Scheer and Hipper. Both sides claimed victory, but one thing is certain, that the German Fleet never again ventured out to sea, but surrendered to Beatty in 1918.

was no other power possessing the sea-power capable of sweeping the German flag from the seas.[21] Hence, the German fleet presented a paradox, but one which could probably have been solved to the satisfaction of Germany had she been willing to move at a more catious pace, and had Wilhelm seen the importance of cultivating British friendship rather than attempting to defy and frighten her by actions which, after 1904, drove her into a more tightly knit union with France. When the Kaiser realized just where the English strength lay it became an obsession with him to beat them on their own ground, and in attempting "to force these unheeding Englishmen into admiration he constantly did just the very things to provoke their disdain".[22] In spite of this there can be little doubt that while the idea of such a navy may have been the Kaiser's, its realization was due to Tirpitz.[23]

The ultimate effect of the new German Navy Laws upon British public opinion was tremendous, although the resulting anti-German attitude was not immediately apparent after 1900. It took two or three years and the indications by Germany that

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[21]France had a fleet but it was much smaller than that of Britain, although it was the second largest fleet in Europe, next to the Royal Navy. Germany however was not too long in replacing France as the second naval power in Europe.

[22]A. Maurois, The Edwardian Era, (New York, 1933), p. 80.

[23]A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, op. cit., p. 95 f.

her naval expansion was really only just beginning before people in Britain began to fear that a challenge to their sea supremacy was going to be made in the foreseeable future. Britain had always been interested in the building of the German fleet, but it was not until 1904 that she began to fear this new creation being constructed across the North Sea.[24]

British cognizance of the defects in their own navy was not due entirely to the German actions, for Fisher and a few others began to agitate for reform in the 1880's, and the questions of fleet distribution and the 'power standard' were being aired in official circles in the 1890's, but certainly after the turn of the century the fear which began to arise over the German policy, "reacted upon the British Navy and gave it a new and vigorous life".[25] The German scare did much to aid Fisher in the exercising of his talents at the Admiralty, and it lay behind his redistribution scheme in 1904 and the Home Fleet reorganization in 1906 and the years following. The Fisher reforms were a recognition of the fact that, with the rise of such a formidable sea power as Germany, British naval plans had to be re-orientated, and could no

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[24] W.L. Langer, op. cit., V.II, 427.

[25] A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, op. cit., p. 107.

longer be based on the idea that France and Russia were Britain's chief naval rivals.[26]

Tirpitz could not, and the Emperor would not, understand the British anxiety over the increases in the German navy. Tirpitz felt that, owing to commercial jealousy, British politicians were fostering the idea that Germany was the common enemy, yet the attempts made by Britain between 1896 and 1902 to come to some kind of a naval agreement with Germany failed, largely because Germany wanted to attach political strings -- either British adherence to the Triple Alliance or a guarantee of neutrality in the event of a continental war. The Germans were under the illusion that Britain would never be able to reach an understanding with France, and hence she would always be in an isolated position. It must be admitted that between 1880 and 1902, Anglo-French relations were very strained and there were some grounds for the German outlook, but the Germans overlooked the fact that the French were capable of compromising -- hence the Entente with Britain in 1904. The Germans were not possessed of this compromising spirit and as a result, by following a policy of 'all or nothing', they got nothing. With respect to a naval agreement Tirpitz said, "there is no real reason why the

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[26] C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

interests of the various nations at sea should not be based on a principle of mutual give and take, just as on land".[27] Such an attitude was logical for Germany, who was the supreme land power (and certainly she would not have brooked any scheme which appeared to challenge her power) but rightly or wrongly Britain was determined that Germany was not to gain supremacy at sea. Very well could Tirpitz claim that the new fleet stimulated national pride and honour, and that of all the countries, only England looked unfavourably upon it.[28] Naturally, what Tirpitz and most other Germans failed to realize was that no other country so relied upon sea power as did England. The result of the German attitude was that by 1904 Britain satisfied herself by getting an Entente with France, and shortly afterwards Metternich[29] wrote that France would attempt to bring England and Russia together, thus making any Anglo-German agreement impractical.[30]

The Entente with France, April 1904, was in a sense a last resort. Britain saw that continued isolation was no longer feasible, and for alliance purposes she faced a choice

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[27]Von Tirpitz, op. cit., V.I, 234.

[28]Ibid., p. 238 f.

[29]Count Metternich, 1853 to 1934.
German Ambassador at London 1901 to 1912.

[30]Von Bülow, Memoirs, (London, 1931, 3 V.), V.II, 63.

of either France or Germany.[31] She favoured an agreement with the latter, but failing that, one with the former would do. This understanding with France was important because it meant that Britain was formalizing her policy, whereas prior to 1904 she really had no definite policy, and if anything, was generally inclined to show a bias towards the German bloc. Now, although few in Britain realized it, the continental countries saw that the British vote had been given to France, her power of 'veto' was lost, and although Germany appeared undisturbed through all this, the European nations knew what she was thinking.[32] Not only was political policy formalized, but so was naval policy, under Fisher, for it was no secret whom Britain looked upon as her enemies in the next war.

If the average Englishman understood little of the ramifications of the Entente, Tirpitz did not fare much better.

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[31]Britain signed an alliance with Japan, January 30, 1902, (revised in 1905) which provided security for both British and Japanese interests in the Far East, and allowed Britain to confine her naval strategy to Europe. The alliance laid the basis for Japan's becoming the supreme power in the Far East; and by isolating Russia, the way was prepared for a single-handed duel between Russia and Japan which began in February 1904, for Japan would not tolerate a strong Russia in Korea and Manchuria. Bülow thought the alliance a good one because it would keep Russia busy in the Far East, and thus prevent a rapprochement between Britain and Russia.

See: J.A. Spender, Fifty Years of Europe, (New York, 1953), p. 208. Fisher did not approve of the alliance with Japan because he felt it would turn Russia and France against Britain. He favoured an alliance with both France and Russia.

[32]J.A. Spender, op. cit., p. 218.

He considered it an evil scheme which Britain, France, and Russia had conjured up against Germany by suppressing their natural differences[33], and it was, in German eyes, proof of the evil designs of King Edward in his attempt to 'encircle' Germany.[34] However, by 1904 Britain felt that Germany was not trustworthy and that co-operation was practically impossible. This feeling did much to move Britain into the French camp, and to give reasons which the laity could understand for the necessity of the naval reforms which were carried out under Fisher. Speaking of the Entente, Spender[35] remarks that:

> ... we did not see that our joining up with France was for them a dangerous disarrangement of the balance of forces on which they relied for their safety; and the Germans did not see that in a fighting world supremacy at sea was vital to our safety.[36]

English feelings regarding the importance of naval supremacy were also echoed by King Edward while visiting the Kaiser at Kiel, June 25, 1904, where practically the entire

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[33]Von Tirpitz, op. cit., V.I, 260.

[34]See: H. Kantorowicz, The Spirit of British Policy, (London, 1931) pp. 363-477.

[35]J.A. Spender, 1862 to 1942.
Prominent English Journalist.

[36]J.A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics, (London, 1927, 2 V.), V.I, 188.

German navy was displayed, much to the chagrin of Tirpitz.[37] The King took the opportunity of saying to Bülow how imperative it was that Germany understand that since the safety of England, "depends on the safety of her fleet the British Admiralty builds two new English ships to every one German".[38]

The fear of Germany which became apparent in England after 1904, and which steadily increased thereafter, made the people not only more aware of the necessity of maintaining supremacy at sea, but determined that such supremacy was not going to pass into other hands. Also becoming apparent was the fact that the old 'two power' concept as it applied to France and Russia, had to be altered, and it became necessary to have a fleet strong enough to meet any international crisis.[39] This soon came to mean however that Britain was building mainly against Germany, and when Fisher came to power on October 21, 1904, he set to work immediately to reorganize the Royal Navy so it would be able to give the fullest possible protection against Germany, who he considered to be the arch-enemy.

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[37]Bülow remarks that both he and Tirpitz opposed Edward's visit to Kiel for fear he would see the rapidity of German naval development. It was finally agreed that only a few ships would be on hand, however the Kaiser secretly ordered the entire fleet to appear. Tirpitz also feared that the Kaiser would brag about the navy to Edward.
See: Von Bülow, op. cit., V.II, 22 ff.

[38]Von Bülow, op. cit., V.II, 26.

[39]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 53.

CHAPTER II

THE CONDITION OF THE NAVY BEFORE 1902

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Royal Navy, as a conservative institution, ranks second to none. In this respect it is the equal of the House of Lords, and like the Lords, has a long history during which time much tradition has been woven into its organization. The Royal Navy has not been amenable to change, even when change was vital to its very existence. Up until the middle of the nineteenth century Nelson, or even Drake, had they returned, would have felt very much at home in the Royal Navy because it remained in essence what it had been in Tudor and Stuart times.[1]

There was, however, during the latter part of the nineteenth century a veritable revolution in things naval. Steam replaced sail, iron replaced wood, explosive shells replaced the solid cannon-balls, breech-loading guns replaced the old cast-iron muzzle-loaders, torpedoes and mines were utilized as weapons of defence, and new types of ships were introduced.[2] It became increasingly more evident, at least to those who were interested both in the welfare of their own

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[1]F.J.C. Hearnshaw, Sea-Power and Empire, (London, 1948), p. 189.

[2]Ibid., p. 190.

navy and in technical progress, that full advantage must be taken of these new scientific achievements. This was especially true of England, for her existence as a nation, let alone as a world colonial power, depended primarily upon her fleet. The far-sighted, such as Sir John Fisher, saw this very clearly, but his stand was one taken only by a very few.

A strong conservative influence held sway in the navy from 1850 to 1900, during which time most of these new devices appeared. Ironclads were slow to be adopted largely because England was without a serious naval rival, and such was the faith held in sails that the early steamers were fully equipped both with sails and coal-bunkers, and steam was not trusted as a reliable means of propulsion until the advent of the screw which allowed the paddle-wheel to be abandoned.[3] Indeed, as late as 1872 steam was considered too unreliable to warrant the removal of the sails and rigging from ships.[4] This was a ruling which Fisher felt lingered much too long and for no other reason than to appease the 'old fossils' who feared change. In fact the object in those days seemed to be to keep the ship clean and polished, the ropes taut, with no regard for the fighting efficiency of the vessel.[5] Nevertheless,

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[3]D. Mathew, The Naval Heritage, (London, 1944), p. 203 ff.

[4]R.H. Bacon, The Life of Jellicoe, (London, 1936), p.11.

[5]Lord Fisher, Records, (New York, 1920), p. 10.

during the 1870's and 1880's an atmosphere of change was slowly permeating the navy, although it was the younger officers whose minds were most susceptible to the innovations. The steel breech-loading guns of Sir William Armstrong[6] were becoming the staple armament, and their use in turn destroyed the old notions of short-range action and necessitated improved gunnery techniques. It was during this period too that torpedoes were coming to be recognized as having some real offense value, and by 1884 'torpedo boats' were considered to be such a menace that to give protection to the fleet a design for a 'torpedo boat destroyer' was put forth.[7] This was the prototype of what we now know as a 'destroyer'. Fisher was very concerned about torpedoes and as early as 1881, while he was stationed in the Mediterranean as Captain of the 'Inflexible',[8] realized

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[6]Sir William Armstrong, (1810 to 1910).
Founded the Elswick Manufacturing Works, and later turned to gun-making. In 1859 his first breech-loader appeared and was adopted by the British Government, but it was soon abandoned owing to defects in the breech mechanism. Armstrong's principle was re-adopted in 1880.

[7]D. Mathew, op. cit., p. 238 f.

[8]The Inflexible, completed in 1881, and her sister ships Ajax and Agamemnon (smaller types) were the last British warships to mount muzzle-loaders, and they indicated the abandonment of the masted battleship. As late as 1886 the Imperieuse and Warspite were launched to carry heavy brig-rig, but this was soon altered to a single mast between the funnels.
See: F.T. Jane, The British Battle Fleet, (London, 1915, 2 V.) V.II, 15, 32.

the great role torpedo-boats would play in war-time as weapons of offence.[9] It was also noticeable in ships of this period that with the advent of quick-firing breech-loading guns there was a return to the old ironclad idea of heavy armour, necessitating reduced speed and armament. Such a theory was contrary to the ideas of Fisher who stressed speed and fire-power, thus giving a ship which could strike without being struck.[10]

The 1880's saw the growth of an 'imperialistic' spirit in England, and this caused much attention to be focused upon the navy. Many came to realize just how important was the Royal Navy to the defence of both England and the Empire, and to what a great extent the nation's existence depended upon her fleet. A fear arose that the state of the navy was not such as to afford this necessary protection, and the politicians were accused of having allowed the navy to decay. The result was the appointment in 1888 of a Committee to consider the entire question of ship-building, especially such aspects

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[9]F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 9.

[10]At this time the Fleet Ordnance was badly handled because it was controlled by the War Office. In 1886 Fisher became the Director of Ordnance of the navy, and supported by the First Lord, Lord G. Hamilton, he had a committee set up to investigate the ordnance problem. This resulted in naval munitions being placed under the control of the Admiralty.

as the best type of ship and the number of each type deemed necessary for defence purposes.[11] The report of this Committee led to the passing of the Naval Defence Act in 1889 which called for the building, as quickly as possible, of seventy ships, the estimated cost being £21,500,000.[12] The Act also called attention to the fact that there were in the navy insufficient engine-room complements and an excess of untrained stokers.[13] These defects Fisher tried to remedy in 1902. It was calculated that this building project would provide Britain with a fleet capable of competing successfully against the combined strength of the next two strongest naval powers.[14]

It would be unfair to say that prior to the end of the nineteenth century nothing was done to improve the Royal Navy besides the addition of seventy ships. Cognizance had been taken of the need for a Naval Intelligence Department (hereafter referred to as N.I.D.), for schemes for fleet manoeuvres, and for increased expenditure on naval works.[15] In

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[11] F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 57.

[12] The Act of 1889 called for the building of the following ships: ten armoured battleships (eight first-class; two second-class); nine first-class cruisers; twenty-nine second-class cruisers; four third-class cruisers; eighteen torpedo boats.
See: F.T. Jane, V.II, 61 ff.

[13] F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 57.

[14] At this time the next two strongest naval powers were France and Russia.

[15] A.J. Marder, Fear God and Dreadnought, (London, 1952, 1956, 2V.), V.I, 147 f.
Hereafter this work will be referred to as F.G.D.N.

all of these fields at least a beginning was made. Under the First Sea Lord, Sir Frederick Richards, much work was done in the field of matériel.[16] He did much to remove the "hodge-podge battleship designs of the 1880's",[17] although credit for this must also be given to the Committee of 1888 who did a great deal towards standardizing ship designs. However, while a start had been made, and a somewhat tardy one at that, much still remained to be done. The reform work was not yet finished, even though many were willing to believe that no further changes were necessary. For example, nothing had been done to reform the naval officer training programme, and neither had steps been taken to provide a 'war college', or detailed war plans. In essence Britain had a navy, but very few realized how it should be deployed in the event of a war. At the end of the nineteenth century the Royal Navy was an imposing force numerically, but in many respects it was a thoroughly moth-eaten, inefficient organization.[18] Throughout it was permeated with lethargy, and dominated by a conservative hierarchy who considered that their main function was to oppose

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[16] Sir Frederick Richards, 1833 to 1912. Junior Sea Lord 1882 to 1885; Commander of the China station 1890 to 1892; First Sea Lord 1893 to 1899.

[17] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N, V.I, 147.

[18] Ibid., V.I, 147.

change.

The great naval changes which took place from 1850 to 1900 were not restricted in their application to Britain alone. By 1900 other nations, especially Germany, were turning their attention towards the building up of their naval strength, and this, in British eyes, was a challenge to her naval supremacy.[19] Britain certainly had the technical skill, resources, and general facilities for building and maintaining a large, up-to-date fleet, and following 1900 she had no choice but to construct such a fleet if she wished to maintain her status as THE world sea power. This necessitated many changes, ranging from the type of ships required to a new education programme, for quite clearly the writing was on the wall, and 'Jackie' Fisher was one of the few able, or willing, to read it. A nation needs only one such person as Fisher, but at the proper time -- and Britain was fortunate that she possessed such a man at a most crucial period in her history.

Fisher, so far as the conservative elements were concerned, was the incarnation of revolution. He represented all that was modern and progressive in naval thought, at least so far as the matériel and technical aspects were concerned. He

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[19]From 1899 to 1914 Britain's policy towards the Continent was largely determined by the Anglo-German naval rivalry.

realized what still had to be done in order to make the Royal Navy an efficient fighting machine, and he saw that a bitter struggle would be necessary before the ideas which had dominated the navy for centuries could be replaced by others more in keeping with the new mechanical era. This change, he felt, could only come about by making a 'clean sweep' of all the old personnel whom he could not convert to his way of thinking. Fortunately, however, there were some who refused to be converted only until they had seen demonstrative proof of the soundness of the new reforms, for England relied too heavily upon her fleet to sacrifice it to radical experiments. Fisher was not interested in piece-meal reforms, but rather the changes had to be sweeping if the navy was to be put on a truly modern basis. The navy had really changed so little over the previous few centuries that it failed, by 1900, to grasp fully the idea that modernization was essential if sea supremacy was to be maintained. Thus, for Fisher, the situation called for a broad, 'all or nothing', reform programme, and as far as ship building was concerned he set forth his principle in a letter to Barnaby,[20] which was "to make each succeeding ironclad an

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[20] Nathaniel Barnaby (afterwards Sir Nathaniel), 1829 to 1915.

Assistant Naval Constructor 1864 to 1870; Chief Constructor 1870; President of the Council of Construction in 1872; and made Chief Naval Architect (later changed to Director of Naval Construction); retired 1885, and received the K.C.B.

improvement and as perfect as you can. There is no progress in uniformity."[21]

On July 1, 1899, Fisher was appointed Commander-in-Chief (hereafter referred to as C.-in-C.) of the Mediterranean Fleet, a post he held until June 2, 1902.[22] During these years he showed signs of his organizing ability in the way he handled fleet manoeuvres, and was instrumental in making the gunnery much more efficient. By giving a series of witty lectures in which he outlined his views on the tactical use of ships in any future war, he encouraged the young officers, who formed his entourage, to study naval tactics and strategy. He stressed the importance of adopting new devices and techniques, and in fact "did much to popularize the idea of a naval war staff, which he strenuously opposed later as First Sea Lord".[23]

The years 1900 to 1901 were critical ones for Britain, who was in the throes of the South African War. That war caused so much continental opposition that she was virtually isolated. There was a French invasion scare in Britain in 1900,

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[21]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 114.

[22]Fisher was Third Sea Lord and Controller 1892 to 1896, and was much concerned with the carrying out of the terms of the Defence Act of 1889; appointed to command the North American and West Indies Station in 1897; 1899, prior to going to the Mediterranean, he was the British Naval Representative to the First Hague Peace Conference.

[23]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 152.

and in 1901 there was a fear that the Mediterranean Fleet would be unable to cope with the combined fleets of France and Russia should they move into that area. Fisher at this time was having difficulties with the Admiralty, and he agitated so persistently for more destroyers and increased coal stocks that an Admiralty Committee was sent to the Mediterranean to discuss matters.[24] It was also in 1901 that the Royal Navy almost lost Fisher for he was offered a position at £10,000 a year to sit on the Board of Directors of Armstrong's Elswick firm, replacing Sir Andrew Noble who was gravely ill.[25] Noble, however, recovered and the entire issue was dropped.

Fisher became quite disgruntled over the delay in sending the ships that he had asked for, and he began, more and more to attack the Admiralty administrative machine.[26] Selborne, he felt, did not provide a strong enough hand at the helm of the navy,[27] and what was needed was a more vigorous adminis-

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[24]This Committee consisted of Lord Selborne (First Lord), Lord Walter Kerr (First Sea Lord), and R. Custance (Naval Intelligence Department).

[25]R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, (Letter to White - January 1901), 156.

[26]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Rosebery - May 1901), 194-195.

[27]Ibid., VI, (Letter to Thursfield - November 1900), 164.

tration.[28] He continually pressed for the strengthening of naval forces in the Mediterranean, and was much perturbed upon learning that no provision had been made for destroyers in the Estimates of 1901 to 1902, for in the next naval war he felt victory would be achieved only by a concentration of power of vessels of all classes. He lashed out against the dilatory methods being used in the shipyards, both Royal Dockyards and contract yards, which were constantly causing delays in the completion dates of ships. At one stage he went so far as to suggest to Joseph Chamberlain[29] that Britain should utilize the Italian building yards, so as to snap the British builders out of their lethargy![30]

All these things -- ship building, Admiralty administration, fleet distribution and concentration -- were of great import to Fisher and to them he applied a vigorous hand when he became First Sea Lord in 1904. Meanwhile he had another scheme on his mind, one which aimed at reforming the navy education system. He received an opportunity to pursue this

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[28] Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Rosebery - May 1901), 194-195.

[29] Joseph Chamberlain 1836 to 1914.
An ardent Imperialist. Best known for his work as Secretary for the Colonies 1895 to 1903.

[30] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Chamberlain - November 1900), 165-166.

idea when Selborne[31] offered him the post of Second Sea Lord, under Lord Walter Kerr,[32] the First Sea Lord. This offer was made on the condition that it be clearly understood that there was no guarantee that he would succeed Kerr, and that any differences of opinion were to be kept within the confines of the Board, thus presenting a solidarity to the service and to the outside world.[33] Fisher accepted and returned to the Admiralty, as Second Sea Lord, on June 5, 1902. He was, in effect, head of the personnel department of the navy, and he set to work immediately to draw up a scheme reforming the conditions of entry into the navy, and the training to be received thereafter.

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[31] Lord Selborne, 1859 to 1942.
Under Secretary for the Colonies 1895 to 1900; First Lord of the Admiralty 1900 to 1905; High Commissioner for South Africa 1905 to 1910; Minister of Agriculture 1915 to 1916.

[32] Lord Walter Kerr, 1839 to 1927.
Second Sea Lord 1894 to 1895; Vice-Admiral Commanding the Channel Squadron 1895 to 1897; First Sea Lord 1899 to 1904; Admiral of the Fleet 1904.

[33] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter from Selborne - February 1902), 222.

CHAPTER III

FISHER 1902 TO 1904

For many years Fisher had kept abreast of the latest in naval development. He had continually recommended the adoption of each major innovation so as to improve the fighting efficiency and war readiness of the fleet, the two essentials without which any fleet is useless. The years 1902 to 1904, the last years before Fisher assumed the post of First Sea Lord, constitute the first years of the 'Fisher Era'. These two years provided him with his first real opportunity to formulate and carry out some of the reforms for which he had been agitating for so long. Of primary importance was the new navy education scheme which was designed to train officers to be both seamen and technicians. Fisher also found the time to serve on the Esher Commission which was set up to inquire into the chaotic condition of the War Office. The report of this Commission was important because it helped to settle, in favour of the navy, a dispute which had been raging in England for many years -- viz., was England to be a military or a naval power.

This period may be divided into two sections. The first, extending from June 5, 1902 to August 31, 1903, during which time Fisher was Second Sea Lord, saw the introduction of the Selborne Scheme, inaugurating a new navy education programme.

During the second, from August 31, 1903 to October 21, 1904, when Fisher was sent to the Portsmouth Dockyards as Commander-in-Chief he was named to the Esher Commission.

We turn to the first period, June 5, 1902 to August 31, 1903 which will be considered under the headings of Naval Education prior to 1902 and the Selborne Scheme.

1. NAVAL EDUCATION PRIOR TO 1902

So many new ideas had appeared by 1900 that the conservative stronghold in the navy -- the Board of Admiralty -- was slowly being forced to give way and admit that change was not only inevitable, but also necessary and beneficial. Many of the junior officers were able to perceive, however, that no matter how many new mechanical inventions were adopted by the navy, they could not be efficiently handled unless the officers received some kind of technical training. The training system as it existed in 1900 was not very far removed from what it had been in the seventeenth century inasmuch as men still were trained to handle ships with sails and rigging. This perhaps is not so surprising considering that the navy, per se, had changed very little down to the middle of the nineteenth century. The amazing thing, however, is that as late as 1900, by which time great changes in armament and propulsion had taken place, Lord Selborne could announce in the House of Lords that no change was being considered in the naval education programme. He based his

views on the opinions of admirals and captains, people who, generally have little or no direct contact with the product of the educational system -- the midshipmen.[1] The old training system was successful in training men to handle sailing ships, but it could not be expected to produce personnel fully qualified to handle 'iron and steam' ships. It is true that many men were able to adjust to the new naval innovations but this was in spite of the educational system, not because of it. What was required therefore was a new system of training which would combine technical knowledge with seamanship, for quite clearly, to be an expert in seamanship was no longer sufficient. The necessity of such a change was most lucidly expounded by Fisher, who realized that since advances in science and mechanics had rendered change necessary in the various fields of ship-design and ship equipment, so a corresponding alteration was necessary in the training of the personnel.[2]

Before examining the proposals of Fisher a consideration of the old system is necessary. This will be dealt with under the following sub-headings:

1. The Training Ship
2. Training at Sea
3. Shore Training

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[1]J.S. Corbett, Monthly Review, March 1902.

[2]R.H. Bacon, Life of Jellicoe, p. v.

1. The Training Ship. Boys destined to be officers entered the training ship Britannia[3] between the ages of 12½ and 13½ years, although this was later advanced to 14½ and 15½ years.[4] The boys entered into either the executive, engineering, or marine branch, and they remained at the training ship for approximately fifteen months.

The studies at the Britannia were largely of a theoretical nature, with a concentration on seamanship and navigation, plus such extras as French, physics, naval history, and perhaps a little steam. The entire system of teaching, said Corbett, was designed to ensure that a student would show as little interest as possible in the subject matter. The result was that the system was a failure, for the student acquired what knowledge was of value to him after he left the Britannia.[5]

2. Training at Sea. The student then went to sea, as a midshipman, for a period of three years and for further

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[3]Shore training was tried as early as 1729 with the founding of a Naval Academy at Portsmouth -- the name being changed in 1773 to the Royal Naval Academy, and again in 1806 to the Royal Naval College. This system, largely devoted to the training of the sons of noblemen and gentlemen, lasted until 1837. Then, in 1857 the era of the 'training ship' was introduced, starting with the Illustrious, which was followed in 1859 by the Britannia, stationed at Dartmouth.
See: M. Lewis, The Navy of Britain, (London, 1949), pp. 251-254.

[4]Fisher joined the Britannia on June 21, 1854, at the age of 13.
See: R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.1, 6.

[5]J.S. Corbett, Monthly Review, March 1902.

study.[6] Instruction was given in such fields as steam, torpedo, and gunnery, plus some academic subjects. This did not prove to be satisfactory because of the lack of a qualified teaching staff, a poorly arranged curriculum, and the many distractions at sea, which seriously reduced the amount of time spent at formal study. The First Lieutenant, for example, who was in charge of gunnery and torpedo work, was often called upon to teach seamanship and still perform his regular duties. It is quite remarkable that in spite of such a system some men of note did emerge, although this was a mixed blessing. It buttressed the idea that, since good men

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[6]Throughout the eighteenth century little mention is made of the sea-going 'schoolmaster' although one was probably present most of the time. At first this position carried the rank and pay of a midshipman, and, by Order-in-Council of 1702, the master taught navigation to all youths, although this soon included both mathematics and writing. As a midshipman the schoolmaster was very poorly paid -- approximately 24 s/month. His status began to improve in 1836 with a promotion to the rank of warrant officer, and continued to improve after the closing of the Royal Naval College in 1837, when education was transferred from shore to ship. His title was changed in 1840 to naval instructor and schoolmaster, in 1842 to naval instructor, in 1919 to instructor officer, and in 1941 the head of the branch of the service became the instructor rear-admiral. However, the system of teaching at sea was as dismal a failure in the twentieth century, as it had been in the eighteenth.

See: M. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 192-195.

With the establishment of shore colleges, under Fisher, the head schoolmaster was a warrant officer, and his subordinates were chief petty officers.

See: P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.120, 1903, 899.

emerged, the training system must be good.[7]

3. Shore Training. Upon finishing three years at sea the midshipman became a sub-lieutenant, and the young officer proceeded to Greenwich, which represented the 'university' of the navy. The course here was supposed to have been devoted to navigation but, as Corbett points out, the time was mainly spent in attempting to teach what was supposed to have been taught at sea -- just as the time at sea was used to try to teach what should have been taught in the Britannia.[8] Indeed, Beatty[9] felt the programme at Greenwich was filled with such courses as nautical astronomy, naval architecture, chemistry, mathematics, and physics, with the result that the entire syllabus was much "too rushed to be of much educational value. In consequence, the cramming system prevailed...."[10] Following Greenwich the young officer went to Portsmouth for six months for a short course in gunnery, torpedo, and pilotage.[11]

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[7] J.S. Corbett, Monthly Review, March 1902.

[8] Ibid.

[9] David Beatty (afterwards Earl Beatty), 1871 to 1936. Naval Secretary to the First Lord of the Admiralty 1911 to 1913; Commander of Battle Cruiser Squadron 1913 to 1916; C.-in-C. of Grand Fleet 1916 to 1919; First Sea Lord 1919 to 1927.

[10] W.S. Chalmers, David Beatty, (London, 1951), p. 12.

[11] J.S. Corbett, Monthly Review, March 1902.

With this, the education of the officer was now considered to be complete. Considering the total time spent, and the number of institutions attended, the young officer should have emerged fully equipped to fulfill his duties. Such, however, was not the case, for each year was spent in reviewing and re-learning what had never been mastered before. On top of all this, the entire system was designed to turn out competent seamen rather than men fully acquainted with the new mechanized ships. Hence,

> ... because the old system, which generations of experience had elaborated and polished, worked by itself, we fondly believe that the new one goes on as easily, forgetting that the old simple art is wiped clean away, and in its place is a science that is one vast web of mechanized and physical intricacy that nothing but the highest technical training can ever hope to master.[12]

The problem therefore, and one which Fisher tried to solve, was how to educate men in the art of seamanship, and at the same time give them adequate training in the technical and mechanical skills. By 1900 the days of sails were over but the art of seamanship was still important, although it was no longer the only factor to be considered.[13] Certainly changes in the educational system had been advocated, by,

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[12] Ibid.

[13] W.S. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 8.

for example, the committee of Shadwell[14] in 1870, of Rice in 1875, of Gordon in 1877, and of Luard in 1885, but nothing was done. The Victorian sailors were too content to rely upon tradition with the result that the majority of the recommendations of these committees were never implemented. Not until the Selborne Scheme in 1903 were any radical alterations made.

Then, too, overcrowding in the training institutions was a problem. During the 1890's there was an increase in the number of ships, as provided for by the Defence Act of 1889, and thus a corresponding increase in personnel, yet even before this time the Britannia was full. This was the time when the entire educational system should have been overhauled but this was not done -- in fact nothing was done except the adding of Latin as a requirement for Britannia entrance, and the reduction of the Britannia course to one year.[15]

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[14](i)Admiral Shadwell, 1814 to 1886.
C.-in-C. of China Station 1871 to 1875; President of the Royal Naval College at Greenwich 1878 to 1881.
(ii)Admiral Rice, 1840 to 1927.
Assistant Director of Naval Ordnance 1870 to 1874.
(iii)Mr. O. Gordon, 1813 to 1883.
(iv)Admiral Luard, 1820 to 1910.
Captain Superintendent of Sheerness Dockyards, 1870 to 1875; President of Royal Naval College, Greenwich, 1882 to 1885.
For further information -- See Appendix I, p. 251.

[15]J.S. Corbett, Monthly Review, September 1902.
Luard's Committee recommended that the Britannia course be reduced to one year for those boys who were sixteen years of age and were entering the navy after finishing public school.

The result was that, under Goschen,[16] it was finally realized that the Britannia system had to be abolished, and replaced by a shore college. Thus a new naval college was to be established at Dartmouth[17] with the age of entry for cadets being increased by one year.[18] The work on this project was started in 1898.

It was becoming increasingly more evident that it was useless to appoint committees of investigation, unless some machinery was set up to carry the proposals into effect. The difficulty at the Admiralty was that, while some perhaps realized the need for reform, even they were occupied with other problems, with the result that there was no individual or influential body capable of implementing suitable proposals. The lack of such machinery was realized by both Luard and Shadwell, and in 1870 Shadwell remarked:

> "I think that the whole subject of education in the Navy, both in its junior and senior branches, is one which is so important at this moment that I would advise that a distinct branch or Secretaryship of the Admiralty should be formed for the purpose of watching over it ...."[19]

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[16] Viscount Goschen, 1831 to 1907.
President of the Poor Law Board 1868 to 1871; Chancellor of the Exchequer 1886 to 1892; First Lord of the Admiralty 1895 to 1900.

[17] Dartmouth was designed to accommodate 264 cadets. See: P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.101, 1902, 958.

[18] A.D. Elliot, Life of Goschen, (London, 1911, 2 V.) V.II, 208.

[19] J.S. Corbett, Monthly Review, September 1902.

II. THE SELBORNE SCHEME

Such was the situation which, as Fisher saw, had to be considerably altered, and he stressed, perhaps too much so, the great need for technical education. He realized too that the mechanical age meant an age of theory, and this could only be taught in a land college. It also meant that the prospective officer was going to have to spend more time in the training institution. This, in turn, would necessitate the lowering of the age of entry, which, according to Fisher, should be no later than twelve to thirteen.[20] He favoured such an early entry age because it would allow for the completion of several years of training and the attainment of officer-status at a young age. This, for Fisher, was of paramount importance if the navy was to be staffed with efficient men, as contrasted with the 'old fossils' who at that time dominated the higher ranks.[21] He felt that the basic flaw in the old training system was that of separate entry, whereby the cadet had to choose either the executive, engineering, or marine branch. This had to be abolished and replaced by a common-entry system, whereby all entering the naval college would be 'put into the same bottle' so that

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[20] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Thursfield - July 1902), 225.

[21] Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Selborne - January 1901), 180.

each cadet would receive the same basic training. Then, after a specified period of time a selection was to be made of those suitable for performing engineering duties.[22] The great advantage of such a system, thought Fisher, would be that with common-entry everyone would receive an adequate dose of technical training and at the same time receive training requisite for the performing of executive functions. This train of thought was not new to Fisher, for on October 3, 1873, one of the Admiralty Lords wrote, after hearing Fisher lecture on board the Torpedo School Ship, H.M.S. Vernon:

> "The result of my observations was that in my opinion the torpedo has a great future before it and that mechanical training will in the near future be essential for officers."[23]

These were the lines along which Fisher was thinking before he became Second Sea Lord, June 5, 1902, and the lines along which he formulated his new education scheme. He realized that such a programme would stir up violent opposition, but the point had been reached where an overhaul of the then existing system could be delayed no longer. This idea, as he said to Arnold White,[24] constituted a "d--d big pill to swallow.",

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[22] Ibid., V.I, (Letter to White - November 1901), 211-212.

[23] Lord Fisher, Memories, (New York, 1920), 144.

[24] Arnold White, 1848 to 1925. Prominent English Journalist.

but large or small, swallowing it had become a necessity.[25] Fisher received encouragement from the Prince of Wales[26] who welcomed the suggestion that the cadet entry age be lowered, and felt generally that the proposed changes would do much to improve the efficiency of the navy.[27]

Fisher was not alone in his crusade for reform although his cohorts were relatively few in number and were generally found amongst the younger officers. Such men as David Beatty, Arthur Wilson, and Lord Charles Beresford,[28] all appreciated the fact that with the days of masts and sails gone, and with the possibility of a war with a European power[29] in the forseeable future, officers and men had to be trained to the "highest standard of efficiency in handling their weapons and in working the ships that carried them."[30] Fisher's new programme was largely drawn up with the engineer in mind, and it showed

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[25]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to White - August 1902), 263.

[26]Later King George V.

[27]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 266.

[28]David Beatty - See footnote 9, Chapter 3.
Arthur Wilson (afterwards Sir), 1842 to 1921.
Third Sea Lord 1897; C.-in-C. in China 1901 to 1903; C.-in-C. of Home and Channel Fleets 1903 to 1909; Admiral of the Fleet 1907; First Sea Lord 1910 to 1912.
Lord Charles Beresford, 1846 to 1919.
Fourth Sea Lord 1886 to 1888; C.-in-C. in Mediterranean 1903 to 1907; of the Channel Fleet 1907 to 1909; Retired 1909; M.P. for Portsmouth 1910 to 1916.

[29]Thinking in terms of Germany.

[30]W.S. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 85.

a realization of the fact that with mechanization the engineer was certainly as much a necessity on board a ship as the executive officer. Yet the former was not accorded due recognition, although by 1902 the grievances of the engineers were being aired and steps were being taken to improve their position. The training of the officers and men of the Engineering Branch was under consideration by the Board of Admiralty,[31] and provision was being made for improved promotion prospects. The changes being contemplated were the attainment of warrant rank after eight years of confirmed service, instead of ten years; and the minimum age at which such a rank could be obtained was lowered from thirty-five to twenty-nine years.[32] Also, by 1902 an engineer officer had one chance in thirty-two of attaining the rank of captain, this being previously one in forty-five, as compared with the average executive officer who had one chance in eight.[33]

Certainly the engineer officer was relegated to an inferior position, where both promotional opportunities and pay were poor, but by 1902 a start had been made towards ameliorating his grievances. Fisher had been agitating for

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[31] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.103, 1902, 582.

[32] Ibid., V.101, 1902, 1101-1102.

[33] Ibid., V.103, 1902, 1053.

years to have the status of the engineers improved, and he felt the solution to the problem was contained in his idea of the common-entry of all cadets. This provided for training, both in seamanship and technical skill, for all cadets. Fisher tended, however, to concentrate more upon the technical side of education, thus taking seamanship more or less for granted.

Consequently, from June 5, 1902 until the new training scheme was made public the following December 25, Fisher, now Second Sea Lord, worked behind the scenes putting into a formula the educational idea he had been expounding for so many years. In order to avoid the charge by warrant officers that they received no consideration under the new scheme, Fisher suggested to Selborne[34] that some fifty warrant officers should be promoted to the rank of lieutenant.[35] This suggestion was heeded and Arnold-Forster[36] announced on March 6, 1903, that the promotions would be made by selection from the ranks of chief gunners, boatswains, carpenters, and chief engineer artificers, with due regard paid to seniority.[37] During the

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[34]Lord Selborne - See footnote 31, Chapter 2.

[35]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Selborne - November 1902), 265.

[36]H.O. Arnold-Forster, 1855 to 1909.
Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to Admiralty, 1900 to 1903; Secretary for War, 1903 to 1905.

[37]P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.119, 1903, 89.

autumn of 1902 there were stormy times at the Admiralty over the new Fisher proposals, but Selborne stood staunchly behind his Second Sea Lord,[38] and by November, 1902, Fisher could write that his proposals would be accepted.[39] The new scheme was ready by November 21, and the official announcement was planned for December 25. Fisher knew that his ideas were revolutionary and that much criticism would result, but, as he summed up the situation:

> Some fossils are going to say the Board of Admiralty has consulted no one, asked no one's advice; the reply is, we ain't (sic) fit to be here if we have to ask advice![40]

The new scheme was known as the Selborne Scheme, although the plan was drawn up by Fisher. The provisions of the Selborne Scheme were as follows:

1. The replacement of the training-ship by land quarters.[41] This was deemed necessary owing to the overcrowding of the existing training-ships and the longer period of time

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[38] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 243.

[39] Ibid., V.I, (Letter to C. Fisher - November 1902), 266. In this letter Fisher also indicates that he will take up duties at Portsmouth in August, 1903, and that there is a strong rumor that he will succeed to the position of First Sea Lord upon the retirement of Lord Walter Kerr.

[40] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to White - December 1902), 267.

[41] For further details of Selborne Scheme see Appendix II, p. 255.

which in future would have to be spent in mastering technical theory, and it was hoped that under the new system courses would be thoroughly learned, thus eliminating both re-teaching and the final 'cram'.[42]

The length of time to be spent in college was four years, the time being equally divided between,

(i) Junior College at Osborne, Isle of Wight.[43]

(ii) Senior College at Dartmouth.

During the four year period approximately one-third of the time was to be spent on technical subjects with the remainder devoted to a general education. During the two years at Osborne the emphasis was to be on mechanical engineering. The final aim of the new scheme was to turn out an officer who could handle any position on a ship.[44] This was the doctrine of 'interchangeability' which Fisher hoped would remove the rancour and rivalry among the

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[42]Lord Fisher, Records, p. 156.

[43]There was some difficulty over the acquisition of Osborne, a royal residence which Queen Victoria had wished to remain 'an appanage of the British Crown'. (S. Lee, Edward VII, (London, 1927, 2 V.), V.II, 19). Objections were also raised in the House of Commons over King Edward's desire to donate this property to the Royal Navy on the grounds that the King was only a tenant, holding the estates for life.
(P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.115, 1902, 198-207.)

[44]Lord Fisher, Records, p. 157.

various branches of the service, and at the same time create 'experts' but abolish 'specialists'.[45]

2. The entry age into Osborne was to be from twelve to thirteen, and entrance examinations were to be abolished and replaced by an 'interview committee'. This committee was to judge a candidate according to "intelligence and common sense, also general knowledge, power of observation, handwriting, and spelling".[46] This body would be appointed by the First Lord, and was to consist of an admiral, assistant secretary to the Admiralty, a public school master, and another civilian, and the names of those appointed were not to be revealed beforehand. The first of such committees, the composition of which varied somewhat from that outlined above, contained the following.

(i) Sir John Fisher - Committee Head.

(ii) Commander Hyde Parker - serving in the Britannia.

(iii) Mr. Ashford - science master at Harrow and selected headmaster for Osborne.

(iv) Mr. Broddeley - Civil Service and Private Secretary to Selborne.[47]

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[45]Fisher felt that the old system turned out specialists (and in many cases not very good ones) in one particular field. He hoped that the new scheme would turn out officers who would be very proficient in one, or perhaps two fields, but generally competent in all fields so that, if necessary, they could perform any duty required.

[46]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 244.

[47]P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.124, 1903, 1355-1359.

Regarding entry, the First Lord was to be the ultimate authority. There were many who thought that the competitive entrance examination should not have been abolished,[48] but Fisher remembered what a farce they were in his day. Besides, he was very much interested in the personality of an applicant, (in fact, his 'soul') and these attributes could not be measured by an examination.[49]

Fisher was adamant regarding the lowering of the entry age. He felt that an early start was necessary so as to get the 'feel' of things naval, and to develop, while still young, what he termed the four Nelsonic attributes of self-reliance, fearlessness of responsibility, fertility of resources, and power of initiative.[50] These qualities, felt Fisher, which were the sine qua non of those in command, could not be developed in later life. Therefore, the secret was to "begin early and work continuously".[51]

3. The old system of separate entry was abolished and replaced by common entry. Under this new system all cadets received the same training, extending over an eight or nine year

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[48]For example see Ibid., V.118, 1903, 834-835.

[49]Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 129. Fisher remarks that his entrance examination consisted of jumping over a chair while naked, reciting the Lord's Prayer, and doing a rule of three sum.

[50]Ibid., p. 129.

[51]Lord Fisher, Records, p. 96.

period. The first four years were to be spent at Osborne and Dartmouth, followed by four or five years during which time sea experience and higher education were to be acquired. In other words, only when the young officers were about twenty-two years of age and holding the rank of lieutenant would they choose the line in which they wished to specialize. This specialization, however, was to cease upon reaching the rank of Commander, although some engineers would certainly have to continue performing their specialty. Others who, while holding senior ranks, still wanted to carry on with their specialty would have to forego the possibility of obtaining a ship-command. These people would still be eligible for high positions in the Admiralty, dockyards, or Marine Corps.[52]

Fisher defended his scheme as being necessary because:

(i) By establishing the principle of interchangeability, unity and harmony would be created in the service, and much of the old distinction between executives and engineers was removed.

(ii) Fisher felt that under the old system the Royal Marines were wasted because they were trained along army lines and considered themselves more military than naval. Under this new system the Marine officers would be

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[52] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 244-245.

trained like the other naval officers, and so would be of greater value to the navy.

(iii) The new system was a recognition of the fact that owing to increased mechanization it was essential that naval officers at least be acquainted with the working of a ship.[53]

As Fisher said of his new scheme, it was "a combined course of Britannia and Keyham Colleges,"[54] and certainly its most novel feature was the idea of interchangeability to be achieved through common-entry. Marder says that:

> The common entry and training was the crux of the whole reform. Under the old system of training the engine officer, marine officer, and executive officer underwent entirely different courses of instruction with results inimical to the esprit de corps of the Fleet.[55]

Fisher was also desirous of establishing a Naval War

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[53] Ibid., V.I, 245.

[54] Lord Fisher, Records, p. 166. In 1868 the Engineering Branch was divided into two classes, the Professional (commissioned and warrant officers) and Mechanical (artificers). In 1880 the Royal Naval Engineering College was founded at Keyham, near the dockyard at Devonport. At first this establishment was a ship, H.M.S. Marlborough, but this was replaced by a land college in 1888, The R.N.E.C. has recently been moved to the outskirts of Plymouth. The Engineer-in-Chief became the equivalent of Rear-Admiral in 1900, and Vice-Admiral in 1903. (See, M. Lewis, The Navy of Britain, pp. 196-198, 393-394).

[55] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 245.

College for the study of tactics and strategy.[56] This point was conceded even though there was some Admiralty opposition.[57] This project ran into difficulties because it did not include the setting up of a Naval General Staff, owing to the objections of Fisher, to whom the idea of such a planning body was repugnant.[58]

The new training scheme won the immediate support of Lord Spencer.[59] He considered it one of the finest things ever done by any Board of Admiralty.[60] Support also came from some twenty-four captains and commanders whose opinions Fisher valued more highly than those of any admiral because "to quote in any way present Admirals is to lead the public

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[56]Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Selborne - July 1901), 203.

[57]Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Lady Fisher - August 1901), 355.

[58]Fisher advocated such a Naval War College while he was stationed in the Mediterranean, 1899 to 1902. In 1900 a War Course College was established at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. This course, compulsory for captains and commanders, included a study of naval history, tactics, strategy, and international law. In 1906 the War Course College was transferred by Fisher to Portsmouth and called the Royal Naval War College. In 1908 its functions were expanded to include the investigation of problems sent down by the Naval Intelligence Department at the Admiralty. Following World War I the R.N.W.C. was moved back to Greenwich, and named the Senior Officer War Course.
See: A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 21-22.

[59]Lord Spencer, 1835 to 1910.
Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1868 to 1874; 1882 to 1886; Lord President of the Council 1880, 1886; First Lord of the Admiralty 1892 to 1895; Liberal Leader in the House of Lords 1902 to 1905.

[60]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Thursfield - December 1902), 268.

astray, because they are men of the past".[61] Fisher even went so far as to send a letter to The Times, under the nom de plume of "Tria Juncta in Uno", saying that no amount of criticism would be able to stem the tide of this new reform.[62] In the House of Commons Arnold-Forster[63] praised the scheme as being a recognition of the machine age, and he favoured the reduced entry age as opposed to many of the continental systems.[64] He felt too that with the recognition of the value of the engineer, there would, in future, be no difficulty in persuading young officers to select this branch of the service.[65]

Support was also rendered by Beresford, who felt that even the most bitter opponent of the scheme would have to concede that it was a most brilliant effort to grapple with a very complex problem, and he fully agreed that practical scientific training was essential for officers in all branches of the service. He staunchly supported the return to the early age of entry which he felt was of infinite value to the future

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[61] Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Thursfield - January 1903), 268.

[62] Ibid., V.I, (Letter to The Times - January 1903), 360.

[63] Arnold-Forster
See - footnote 36, Chapter 3.

[64] In the German Navy, for instance, the cadet entered at a later age, although he went to sea about the same time as his British counterpart. Also, the German officer was not expected to be as well versed in mechanical matters.
See: A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, German Sea Power, 157-172.

[65] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.119, 1903, 869-971.

efficiency of the fleet.[66]

The introduction of this new scheme was followed by a short period of calm before the storm. Criticism was most certainly expected and, if constructive, welcomed, especially from the younger officers. Many of the senior men proved quite hostile, but then these people usually opposed a change unless shown to be absolutely necessary. Even then they preferred to tinker and waste money, and would never consider such sweeping reforms as Fisher introduced. The opposition began to erupt in 1903 and became increasingly more volcanic as time went on.[67] The criticisms can be considered under two headings,

1. Early Entry
2. Interchangeability

1. Early Entry. This was criticized by Richmond,[68] who felt that Fisher's system laid too much emphasis on the technical aspects, and as a result the general education of the cadet suffered. He felt that boys should not be admitted until they had finished public school (usually sixteen or seventeen years of age) at which time they would be able to

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[66]Lord Fisher, Records, pp. 167-170.

[67]J.S. Corbett, Monthly Review, July 1903.

[68]Herbert Richmond (afterwards Admiral Sir Herbert), 1871 to 1946.
At the Admiralty 1906 to 1909, first as assistant to the First Sea Lord and then as Second Sea Lord.

grasp the material more quickly.[69] To a certain extent this was Churchill's[70] criticism of the scheme, and he also thought that it suffered from not being elastic enough.[71]

Sir John Gorst[72] criticized early entry as being a reversion to a system dropped twenty years previously, and he felt it injurious to a young boy to be separated from the rest of the community at such a young age.[73]

Selborne however supported the scheme and claimed that it was impossible for any boy to receive the desired kind of education at public schools because they lacked both the necessary equipment and the ability to create a naval atmosphere, which he and Fisher held to be very important.[74] He was supported by Spencer who thought that the system of entering boys at a later age and with more public school education behind

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[69] A.J. Marder, Portrait of an Admiral, (London, 1952), pp 39-40.

[70] W.S. Churchill (afterwards Sir), 1874 --.
Under-Secretary for the Colonies 1905 to 1908; First Lord of the Admiralty 1911 to 1915; Prime Minister 1940 to 1945.

[71] W.S. Churchill, World Crisis, 1911 to 1914, (London, 1923, 5 V.), V.I, 93.

[72] Sir John Gorst, 1835 to 1916.
Solicitor General 1885 to 1886; Under-Secretary for India 1886 to 1891; Financial Secretary to the Treasury 1891 to 1892; Member of Parliament for Cambridge University 1892 to 1906.

[73] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.119, 1903, 898-906.

[74] Ibid., V.122, 1903, 186.

them, as instituted under Goschen,[75] had failed.[76] Haldane[77] too gave his support feeling that firstly, a better education would be received than at any public school, secondly, the naval officer would have the necessary knowledge when it came time to differentiate between the various branches, and thirdly, high rank would be attainable at a much younger age. He estimated, for example, that the average German admiral was ten years younger than his British counterpart.[78]

2. Interchangeability. Just criticism was directed at this part of the scheme, although there were those who opposed it for no other reason than that it was an attempt to equip an officer for duties other than those he had had to perform in the days of sail.[79] The Earl of Glasgow felt that it would not be possible for officers to be equally efficient on deck and in the engine-room,[80] and he looked upon this proposal as nothing but a means which provided for the gradual abolition

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[75] Goschen - See footnote 16, Chapter 3.

[76] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.122, 1903, 171-175.

[77] R.B. Haldane (afterwards Viscount), 1856 to 1928. Secretary for War 1905 to 1912; Lord Chancellor 1912 to 1915, 1924.

[78] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.119, 1903, 914-922.

[79] Ibid., V.119, 1903, 883.

[80] This was not intended, but rather that every officer should be expert in at least one field but acquainted with them all.

of the engineering branch as it then existed.[81]

Others thought that engineers would not be given sufficient training, but Fisher replied that the training received was adequate to handle the new turbine engine. In fact, he considered that the turbine would reduce by fifty per cent the number of engineer officers required, and writing in 1906, he stressed the fact that "since October 21, 1904 ... no vessel has been laid down in the British Navy without a turbine."[82]

The one thing that does emerge from the various criticisms of interchangeability is that, with few exceptions, no one was really quite clear as to what was being advocated. Was there to be specialization in one field? In all fields? Was there to be any specialization at all? Thinking on this issue was very confused, the fault lying to a large extent with the original report itself, as presented on December 25, 1902.

Lord Cawdor[83] thought that it was quite reasonable to expect that now all would be given the opportunity of fitting themselves to be captain of a ship.[84] Goschen, however, hit much closer to the truth when he said, while admitting the

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[81] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.122, 1903, 157-163.

[82] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 110.

[83] Lord Cawdor, 1847 to 1911.
First Lord of the Admiralty, March to December 1905.

[84] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.153, 1906, 255-256.

excellence of the colleges at Osborne and Dartmouth, that he doubted if an executive officer, having to learn diplomacy, language, strategy, and tactics, could also master the intricacies of the engineering field.[85] With this Rear-Admiral Hall agreed, and he said on December 1, 1926, what was becoming obvious to some by 1906, that:

> "... the time required to equip sea officers to ... command His Majesty's ships with the necessary knowledge of sea warfare ... left no time for the mastery of engineering; ... similarly it was found that the study and practice of engineering demanded the whole time of an officer."[86]

The entire engineering scheme ran into difficulty both with parents, who objected to their sons being turned into 'mechanics' (and certainly in many minds there was much confusion between the terms engineer and mechanic -- they were thought to be synonymous) and the engineer experts who argued that engineering was a life profession, and not something to be picked up over the course of a few years and practiced when the necessity arose. In spite of such criticism the principle of interchangeability was upheld in 1905 by the report of the Douglas Commission, which was approved by Cawdor. This report clearly stipulated that:

> "... one class of officer can perform engineering and executive duties; specialization in engineering duties need not be permanent: in future all principal

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[85] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.153, 1906, 240-241.

[86] Lord Sydenham, My Working Life, (London, 1927), p.207.

> responsibility for the management of the machinery of His Majesty's ships may be entrusted with confidence to officers who will take those duties as an incident in their career ..."[87]

This report also established that there would be no final separation into fields of specialization until after the rank of commander had been reached.[88]

Fisher weathered the storm, convinced he was right, but time did not vindicate his convictions. Essentially, this scheme failed because of the demand for specialization, which meant that an officer could not be both in the engine-room and on the quarter deck -- a choice had to be made. This fact, to a large extent, nullified the whole of the common-entry idea because upon completing their training there were not enough applicants choosing the engineering branch, which meant that there would have to be a return to the old system of separate entry.[89]

Difficulty too was encountered in dealing with the

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[87]W.H. White, "The Education and Training of Engineers - Civil and Naval", Nineteenth Century, June 1906, p. 1035.

[88]Lord Sydenham, op. cit., p. 208. This regulation was changed following World War I when officers, on reaching the rank of lieutenant-commander, could revert permanently to the executive branch.

[89]M. Lewis, The Navy of Britain, p. 198. In 1925 engineers were dropped from the executive list and reverted to a separate department. Interchangeability was not practical in an age when a high degree of specialization was required.

Marines, and unlike the engineering scheme which was given a trial lasting for twenty-two years, the Marine scheme was shelved very shortly after its inception. There was some confusion here as well for some critics did not understand that Fisher was concerned only with the Marine officers, the idea being to make these officers more useful so far as the modern fighting requirements of the navy were concerned.[90] However, some thought that they saw in these proposals a means whereby the Royal Marines would be completely extinguished,[91] while others thought that it would be quite sufficient if the Marine officer could master his military duties without becoming one-third engineer, one-third naval officer, and one-third military officer.[92] With this Goschen agreed and he felt that this new scheme ran counter to all the tradition and sentiment of the Marine Corps.[93] Then too there was opposition from the Marines themselves, for they resented being turned into either soldiers or sailors. They wanted to remain a 'sea regiment', associated with both forces yet belonging to neither. The result was that by 1911 this part of

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[90] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.153, 1906, 257-258.

[91] Ibid., V.119, 1903, 892.

[92] Ibid., V.153, 1906, 231-232.

[93] Ibid., V.153, 1906, 241.

the programme was practically shelved.[94]

So ran the criticism against Fisher and the Board of Admiralty, and before many months had passed all parts of the new training scheme came under fire. Criticism came from both outside and inside the service and a rift began to appear between the pro-Fisherites and their opponents. Much of this criticism was acute and penetrating as is shown by the changes that took place in the Selborne Scheme in the years following.[95] One other criticism should be mentioned, that being that owing to the cost of sending a boy to Osborne the naval hierarchy was being closed to all except the sons of the wealthy. Fisher was not blind to this defect and from 1903 onwards he realized that state education was the only answer to the problem and sooner or later it would have to come because, quite obviously, brains do not necessarily go with money.[96]

One thing that was certain however was that Fisher had thoroughly jolted the 'old fossils'. They began to think about things that had hitherto been taken for granted. The 'do nothings' began to realize that all was not well with the Royal Navy, and with the Selborne Scheme they received their

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[94]F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 248.

[95]See Appendix III, p. 257.

[96]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - February 1907), 119.

first taste of the 'clean sweep' that was to follow, starting in 1904. We now turn to the second period with which this chapter is concerned -- 31st August 1903 to 21st October 1904.

Fisher remained at the Admiralty as Second Sea Lord only long enough to see his new training scheme piloted through. He left this post to become C.-in-C. at Portsmouth, assuming this position on August 31, 1903. He sought this appointment so as to be able to supervise the building of Osborne College. This additional college was required because under Fisher's new training scheme the length of the course was doubled, which meant that twice the number of cadets would be in training. Osborne College was duly opened by King Edward on August 4, 1904. It was here that cadets were to spend their first two years before proceeding to Dartmouth.[97]

While serving at Portsmouth Fisher participated in the Esher Commission, set up to discover the best means of reconstructing the War Office. Before considering the proposals that were put forth by this Commission it is necessary, as a background, to consider briefly the problems of Imperial Defence prior to 1904.

During the late 1880's, and increasingly so throughout

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[97]Osborne College was merged with Dartmouth in 1921 and became known as the Junior College of Dartmouth. In 1947 it disappeared when the entry age was raised to sixteen. For the cost of an Osborne education see Appendix III, p. 257.

the 1890's many in Britain were giving serious thought to the problems of Empire. The habit of thinking of the Empire as nothing but a mill-stone around the English neck were gone, and had been replaced by the notion that the Empire was worth retaining, worth protecting, and worth developing. The question arose however that, admitting that the Empire, including Britain, required an adequate defence system, what form should this defence take? In other words, was Britain to rely upon her army or her navy, and just what role was each service to play? As far as Fisher was concerned these questions presented no difficulty because since Britain was an island her main line of defence should be her fleet. Clearly, a large army is of little use unless it is mobile and as for the British soldier to go anywhere, "a sailor has got to carry him there on his back"[98] and back again! As was to be expected, however, there was much opposition to this idea. The notion of the 'blue water school' that the army was secondary and was only to act, in conjunction with the navy, with the forces of a continental ally was repugnant to the military authorities. In military eyes Britain needed an army of continental proportions to protect her shores should there be any sudden attempt at invasion. Hence there was formed the 'bolt from the blue school'. While Britain was wealthy, she

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[98]Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 66.

was neither wealthy nor populous enough to provide both a large army and a large navy for the protection of herself and her Empire. She had to choose which of the two to have.

The first major step was taken in June 1888 when the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury,[99] appointed a royal commission, presided over by the Marquis of Hartington,[100] to inquire into the state of both the army and the navy, their relationship with the Treasury, and their relationship with each other.[101] Unfortunately nothing was done to implement the recommendations, issued in two parts, in May 1889 and in May 1890 respectively. Campbell-Bannerman, while Secretary for War,[102] devised some abortive scheme to remedy War Office defects but it failed,[103] and the suggestion was made by

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[99] Lord Salisbury, 1830 to 1903.
Secretary for India 1866, 1874; Foreign Office 1878 to 1880; Prime Minister 1886 to 1892; 1895 to 1902.

[100] Lord Hartington (became Duke of Devonshire in 1891), 1833 to 1908.
Secretary for War 1866, 1882 to 1885; Secretary for India 1880 to 1882; President of the Council 1895 to 1903.

[101] Lord Sydenham, op. cit., p. 99. For further details see Appendix IV, p. 261.

[102] Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, 1836 to 1908.
Secretary for War 1886, 1892 to 1895; Secretary for Ireland 1884 to 1885; Liberal Leader in House of Commons 1898 to 1905; Prime Minister 1905 to 1908.

[103] See: J.A. Spender, Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, (London, 1923, 2 V.), V.I, 146 ff.

Dilke[104] that the Prime Minister should take a more personal concern and responsibility in defence matters, as a means of co-ordinating the functions of both army and navy.[105] Although Salisbury, as a result, set up a Defence Committee of the Cabinet this did not go far enough in meeting the needs of imperial defence.

The army versus the navy controversy raged throughout the 1890's and it was not until the Boer War that the complete chaos prevailing at the War Office was revealed. This war also pointed out very clearly, both to Britain and to the continental powers, the value of sea supremacy. The military people were never able to explain adequately how an invasion was possible as long as Britain controlled the seas, or, should that supremacy be lost, how a large army could be of much value if Britain's food supply were cut, which would certainly happen if control of the seas were lost. In between these two groups were the left-wing Liberals, or 'Little Englanders', who advocated a system of laissez-faire for imperial defence, who were quite willing to accept the idea of Empire from a commercial point of view, but who shirked taking any responsibility as far as the upkeep of the Empire

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[104] Sir C.W. Dilke, 1843 to 1911.
Prominent Liberal politician and Imperialist.

[105] S. Gwynn, J.M. Tuchwell, Sir C.W. Dilke, (New York, 1917, 2V.), V.II, 421.

was concerned.

By 1900 opinion was steadily swinging behind the 'blue water school', and Fisher's ideas on the subordinate role of the army received the support of Salisbury who wrote to Lansdowne,[106] on August 30, 1899, that what was required was a small military force, very mobile, which could be quickly transported to any place in the Empire where needed.[107] This was also the view of Haldane who greatly emphasized the necessity of retaining supremacy at sea and of having a small army to be used for foreign service.[108]

With the Boer War the need for a thorough overhaul of the military machine and its personnel was clearly seen. Broderick[109] attempted to reorganize the army by a scheme announced March 8, 1901, which called for the creation of six new army corps,[110] but where the men were to come from was never explained. Finally it became necessary to call for a full-scale investigation into the cause of the military anar-

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[106] Lord Lansdowne, 1845 to 1927.
Under Secretary for War 1872 to 1874; Under Secretary for India 1880; Governor-General of Canada 1883 to 1888; Viceroy of India 1888 to 1893; Secretary for War 1895 to 1900; Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1900 to 1905.

[107] Lord Newton, Lord Lansdowne, (London, 1929), p. 157.

[108] Sir F. Maurice, Haldane, V.1, (London, 1937), p. 111.

[109] St. John Brodrick (later Lord Midleton), 1856 to 1942.
Financial Secretary to the War Office 1886 to 1892; Under-Secretary for War 1895 to 1898; Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1898 to 1900; Secretary for War 1900 to 1903; Secretary for India 1903 to 1906.

[110] J.B. Atlay, Lord Haliburton, (Toronto, 1929), p. 233.

chy and a commission was set up under Lord Elgin.[111] The report of this commission was published on August 23, 1903, and on the basis of its recommendations the Esher Commission was set up to consider the question of the reconstruction of the War Office.

The thrashing out, during the 1890's, of the army-navy controversy was of great importance to the whole idea of imperial defence, because then, as now, armed forces are of little value unless the way in which they are to be used has been decided upon. Fisher had very definite ideas about the respective role to be played by each service and he did not hesitate to express them. The authorities however required a decade or so to let all the various ideas vegetate, plus a war which heaped little but disdain upon the military machine, before they really decided that the army was in dire need of reform, and in future the primary defence bastion must be the navy. It must not be assumed even then that all were in agreement with this decision, for Lord Roberts[112] certainly was not, and neither was Lord Wemyss,[113] who said that it was the duty

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[111] Lord Elgin, 1847 to 1917.
Viceroy of India 1894 to 1899; Colonial Secretary 1906 to 1908.

[112] Lord Roberts, 1832 to 1914.
Prominent soldier. Spent forty-one years with the British Army in India; C.-in-C. 1899 to 1904.

[113] Lord Wemyss, 1818 to 1914.
Politician and very active in military affairs. Favoured conscription and a large army.

of every British Government to make sure that the home defence forces would be independent of the navy. By 1903 to 1904 however the decision favouring the navy was definitely made and from then on upheld in spite of the efforts of the 'conscriptionists' who were very active from 1905 to 1914. It was this decision too that allowed Fisher to put the navy on a modern footing through a series of reforms extending from 1904 to 1909.

The Elgin Commission, set up as we have seen to inquire into the military preparation for the Boer War, recommended that a War Office Council be established on a more permanent footing,[114] but in effect the commissioners made no official recommendation for reform. Its authority had been limited to the making of a report on the existing military situation.[115] However, some of the commission members went beyond this and submitted minority reports. Esher[116] and three others favour-

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[114]The Defence Committee of the Cabinet, established by Salisbury in 1895, accomplished very little because it was mainly concerned with adjusting the Service Estimates before they were presented to the full Cabinet, and in settling financial disputes between the two services. However, during the winter of 1902 to 1903 it was overhauled and began to deal with 'the larger questions of policy'. C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

[115]C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

[116]Viscount Esher, 1852 to 1930.
Private Secretary to the Marquis of Hartington 1878 to 1885; Secretary to H.M. Office of Works 1895 to 1902.

ed national military education as the only alternative to conscription.[117] By this the commission meant that the schools should give some military training to all. Esher also favoured the abolition of the office of C.-in-C., decentralization of the War Office, and a reorganization of the War Office on Admiralty lines.[118] Two other commissioners supported these proposals. It was on the basis of the minority reports that the Esher Commission was formed.

That Esher was dissatisfied with the general findings of the Elgin Commission, of which he was a dissenting member, can be seen as early as April 30, 1903, before the report was out, for he wrote:

> "... there is no chance of agreement upon the points which I care most about. The majority are timid and do not wish to commit themselves to any proposition which is at all controversial.
> ... I shall print my own ideas in a separate memorandum."[119]

Esher sent his views to the King,[120] but felt that little could be done until Brodrick, who was too timid to tackle any reform job, was removed as Secretary for War.[121] Esher also

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[117] D. James, Lord Roberts, (London, 1954), p. 392.

[118] C.B. Tunstall, op. cit.

[119] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, (London, 1934 to 1938, 4 V.), V.I, 400.

[120] Ibid., V.I, 406 ff.

[121] Ibid., V.I, (Letter to M.V.B. - June 1903), p. 411.

thought that much of the army chaos would not have been present had the recommendations of the Hartington Commission been carried into effect,[122] and, as the public were much interested in the Elgin Report when it appeared, he considered that the time was ripe for the launching of a reform programme.

There was a temporary delay, however, because of the Balfour Cabinet Crisis[123] which lasted most of September, 1903, and the new Ministry was not announced until October 6. One good thing which emerged from the crisis was the transferring of Brodrick to the India Office.[124] The latter was succeeded at the War Office by Arnold-Forster, who it was thought was more in keeping with the idea of reform than Brodrick.

Esher suggested to Balfour, September 24, 1903,[125] that a War Office Reconstruction Committee be set up, consisting of himself, Fisher, and Brackenbury.[126] The King favoured

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[122]See Appendix IV, p. 261.

[123]A.J. Balfour, 1848 to 1930.
Secretary for Scotland 1886 to 1887; Secretary for Ireland 1887 to 1891; Prime Minister 1902 to 1905.
The Cabinet crisis arose over the question of tariffs and Balfour lost five Ministers.

[124]See: Viscount Esher, op. cit., v.II, (Letter to M.V.B. - September 1903), 14.

[125]Viscount Esher, op. cit., V.II, V.16.

[126]General Sir Henry Brackenbury, 1837 to 1914.
Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master General 1886 to 1891; Military Member of the Council of the Viceroy of India 1891 to 1896; Director-General of Ordnance 1899 to 1902.

the appointment of Fisher, although the Admiralty was somewhat concerned that this might interfere with his duties at Portsmouth. Esher, however, felt that on no account could Fisher be dispensed with.[127] Fisher, by this time, was becoming fairly well known as an organizer and administrator, and he saw a chance to do for the army what he planned to do for the navy. Before agreeing to join Esher, he stipulated that the Committee must be "ruthless, relentless, and remorseless", and that all their proposals must be accepted in toto.[128] A difficulty arose when Fisher refused to serve with Brackenbury,[129] so finally Sir George Clarke was appointed instead of the latter.[130] Since Clarke at that time was Governor of Victoria it was decided that Fisher and Esher should begin the proceedings, and Clarke could join when he arrived back in England.[131] Hence, by November 7, 1903, the membership of the Commission was settled upon and the investigation began, being conducted by interview rather than by formal hearings.

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[127] Viscount Esher, op. cit., V.II, 29.

[128] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Sandars - October 1903), 288.

[129] Viscount Esher, op. cit., V.II, 28.

[130] Sir G.S. Clarke (Later Lord Sydenham), 1848 to 1933. Employed at the War Office 1885 to 1895; Superintendent of Woolwich 1894 to 1901; Governor of Victoria 1901 to 1904; Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence 1904 to 1907; Governor of Bombay 1907 to 1913.

[131] Viscount Esher, op. cit., V.II, (Letter to M.V.B. - November 1903), 30.

Hardly were proceedings underway when Fisher presented a rough draft of his proposed new army board. He applied the principles of the 'clean sweep', as he had done with the navy educational system. First of all it had to be determined, he said, what the new army board was going to administer, and then how large an army was to be maintained.[132] Fisher advocated an immediate army reduction, if possible, and an "entire 'clean-out' of the present military gang at the War Office, root and branch, lock, stock, and gunbarrel".[133] This 'all or nothing' approach of Fisher stirred up much violent opposition, but that had little effect on 'Jackie' for he thrived on opposition. Perhaps he too much enjoyed keeping the 'pot boiling', but this was the only way he saw of accomplishing anything, for lethargy and inefficiency are not removed by wishing, but only by strong and determined action.[134] It is to Fisher's credit that he not only realized this but acted accordingly, for critics are many but men of action are few.

The Esher Commission completed its investigation in record time and on January 11, 1904, sent two reports to Balfour advocating the establishment of a Committee of Imperial

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[132]See: Lord Fisher, Memories, (Letters to Esher, 1903), p. 167.

[133]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Esher - December 1903), 292.

[134]For information regarding Fisher's proposed army board, see Appendix V, p. 263.

Defence (hereafter referred to as C.I.D.), and the placing of the Secretary of State for war on the same footing as the First Lord of the Admiralty, thereby abolishing the office of C.-in-C.[135] The preliminary report was submitted by Balfour to the King on January 29, 1904, and the final draft was accepted by the King on February 26.[136] The great advantages of this new scheme were that by abolishing the office of C.-in-C.[137] the dual control between the C.-in-C. and the Secretary for War came to an end, and that through the new Secretary, Parliament now would have a more direct control over the military forces.

The years 1902 to 1904 were important to Fisher for reasons other than his new navy training scheme and his participation in the Esher investigation. There was no promise given to Fisher[138] that he would succeed Lord Walter Kerr as

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[135]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 280. For further information see Appendix VI, p. 265.

[136]A.J. Marder, op. cit., V.I, 281.

[137]This was done on February 18, 1904 upon the retirement of Lord Roberts. For further information regarding the Esher proposals and their reception, see the following:
(i) J.S. Corbett, Monthly Review, March and June, 1904.
(ii) J.B. Atlay, Lord Haliburton, p. 265 ff.
(iii) D. James, Lord Roberts, p. 399 ff.
(iv) R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 205 ff.

[138]Fisher was made a rear-admiral in 1890; a K.C.B. in 1894; a vice-admiral in 1895; an admiral in 1901.

First Sea Lord, but before he accepted the Portsmouth position rumour was that such would be the case.[139] Fisher, however, was not so certain for he had antagonized many people both in the Admiralty and the Cabinet. While the authorities pondered over the question of Kerr's successor Fisher turned to other tasks, one of these being a reorganization of the duties of each Sea Lord at the Admiralty. His formula was:

> "The Controller[140] builds the ships, the Second Sea Lord mans them, the Junior Lord[141] supplies them, and the First Sea Lord directs them, and the First Lord controls and supervises the whole."[142]

This involved the placing of consumable stores under the Fourth Sea Lord, these having been formerly under the Controller, and Fisher sought to have all personnel questions placed under the Second Sea Lord. Up until this time the appointing of chaplains, medical officers, paymasters, and certain warrant officers, had been controlled by the Fourth Sea Lord. The Fourth Sea Lord, under the new system, now would be in charge of the transport and supply of the fleet.[143] Fisher wrote to Selborne, July 28, 1904, that he had obtained

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[139]See: p. 26 Chapter 2.

[140]Third Sea Lord.

[141]Fourth Sea Lord.

[142]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 270.

[143]Ibid., V.I, 360.

an Order-in-Council for his Admiralty reorganization scheme, which gave the First Sea Lord 'nothing to do'! This however must be taken with a grain of salt because for Fisher, 'nothing to do' meant that his daily work was reduced to normal proportions. Even this however was not to be the case because Fisher continued to put all his zeal and energy into Admiralty affairs, and it is doubtful if there ever was a First Sea Lord who worked as hard. Also, with these new reforms he was successful in having the term Sea Lord revived, which dated from 1613, "but which some silly ass 100 years ago altered to Naval Lord".[144]

Fisher was also giving much thought to the organization of the navy for war. His thinking stressed the fact that what was most vital was a concentration of power in the North Sea, not in the Mediterranean as had been traditional. Why such a change in policy? Simply because by 1904 Britain viewed Germany, not France, as the major threat to her security.[145] The navy he felt had to be put on a war-footing which would involve not only a redistribution of the fleets so as to achieve the

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[144]Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 181. Final approval to Fisher's scheme was not given until 1929. See Appendix VII, p. 269, and A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Esher - July 1904), 320.

[145]Britain signed an Entente with France in April, 1904. For further information on this and Anglo-German naval rivalry see Chapter I.

necessary concentration of power, but also necessary economies, the removal of all superfluities, and the institution of two-year commissions for officers. He saw too the dire straits in which the navy reserve was wallowing and felt that this branch would also have to be overhauled.[146]

Fisher felt that men were everything for without adequate personnel a navy was nothing. With a few ships and good men a nation could have a good, small navy, but with many ships and poor men there was no navy at all. This was the starting point for Fisher and the Selborne Scheme of 1902 was the first plank in his plan of reform.

Fisher developed his ideas, while at Portsmouth, about four points:

1. The future types of fighting vessels
2. The retirement of outdated fighting ships
3. The revision of fleet stations
4. Personnel

1. Future Types of Fighting Vessels. Great changes in ship designs were planned by Fisher. These included the introduction of water-tight bulkheads, greater magazine protection, the abolition of the ram, and the introduction of "uniform armament (except torpedo attack guns) in all classes of fight-

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[146] Lord Fisher, Records, p. 133 ff.

ing vessels".[147] All were later utilized in the Dreadnought, the plans for which were decided upon by a Designs Committee, under the presidency of Fisher,[148] and approved by Selborne. So revolutionary were these new plans that Fisher insisted that no new battleships be laid down until he took over as First Sea Lord.[149]

2. The Retirement of Out-Dated Fighting Ships. The ultimate aim of Fisher here was the withdrawal from service of all vessels below the status of a first-class armoured cruiser, and the introduction of a 'nucleus crew' system on vessels in reserve. These principles were to appear in Fisher's 'scrapping policy'![150]

3. The Revision of Fleet Stations. This would come with the redistribution of the fleet.

4. Personnel. Fisher realized that the only way an adequate reserve of men could be built up was by the introduction of a non-continuous service system, whereby a certain number of years were spent on active duty followed by a specified number of years in the reserve.[151]

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[147]Ibid., p. 129 ff.

[148]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Esher - August 1904), 325.

[149]Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Selborne - August 1904), 321.

[150]Lord Fisher, Records, p. 130.

[151]Ibid., p. 131.

Meanwhile he applied the principles of speed and efficiency to the Portsmouth Dockyard where he took measures designed to increase the speed of shipbuilding. Rather than have workmen building several ships at once, with only a few men assigned to each vessel, Fisher sought to have the men concentrate their effort on one ship at a time, and to make all possible use of the 'piece work' system.[152] He fully realized that this method was contrary to the ancient and accepted (and therefore correct!) system of building ships in batches, but this system had to be changed and he was quite prepared to undertake the necessary alterations.

It was also while he was at Portsmouth that Fisher began a lasting friendship with King Edward,[153] who also was much interested in the welfare of the navy. It was a characteristic trait of the King to place great faith in the judgement of one or two men where matters of special import were concerned, and for the navy the Royal Trustee was 'Jackie' Fisher.[154] Conversely, Fisher felt that the support of the King was

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[152]This 'piece-work' system was to contribute not a little to the building of the Dreadnought in such a relatively short period of time.

[153]King Edward VII, 1841 to 1910.
Reigned from 1901 to 1910.

[154]S. Lee, Edward VII, (London, 1927, 2 V.), V.II, 327.

absolutely necessary for the success of his naval reforms. He informed the King that vast and sweeping changes were needed to give the fleet fighting efficiency and instant readiness for war,[155] neither of which conditions were present before Fisher went to the Admiralty.

The rumours about Fisher's going to the Admiralty finally proved to be correct: it is doubtful if anyone else was seriously considered for the position. He would accept the position however, only on the condition that his successor at Portsmouth met with his approval, and that the First Lord, Selborne, guarantee to support his proposed reforms.[156] Once these assurances had been given Fisher accepted the offer on May 16, 1904, after having a two hour conference with Selborne. It was also decided that he would commence his new duties on October 21 -- Trafalgar Day![157]

At first Fisher did not know what to think of Selborne and was expecting some opposition from him.[158] Esher did not think too highly of the First Lord, considering him to be

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[155]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Knollys - August 1904), 327.

[156]Ibid., V.I, 283.

[157]Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Esher - May 1904), 316. Nelson was Fisher's ideal.

[158]Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Esher - May 1904), 317.

obstinate and only of average ability,[159] but Knollys[160] did not agree that Selborne was of such limited capacity.[161] Fisher's fears about Selborne were soon seen to have been ill-founded and he developed a fondness for the First Lord, who certainly stood behind the new reform schemes, which he had approved by August 21, 1904,[162] much to the surprise of the Prince of Wales.[163] Shortly afterwards Fisher was informed of Selborne's intention to retire and he was quite perturbed over the thought of a successor, for he had reason to believe that the vacancy might fall to Walter Long,[164] under whom he would not serve. Fisher felt that the First Lord should be a peer, and so told the King, who quite agreed and suggested that at the next change of government Lord Tweedmouth probably would be

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[159] Ibid., V.I, (Esher on Selborne - July 1904), 367.

[160] Viscount Knollys, 1837 to 1924.
Private Secretary to King Edward VII, and later to George V.

[161] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Knollys to Fisher - August 1904), 367.

[162] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Esher - August 1904), 325.

[163] Ibid., V.I, (Prince of Wales to Fisher - August 1904), 326.

[164] Walter Long, 1854 to 1924.
Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board 1886 to 1892; President of the Board of Agriculture 1895 to 1900; President of the Local Government Board 1900 to 1905; 1915; Colonial Secretary 1916; First Lord of the Admiralty 1919 to 1921.

appointed. This satisfied Fisher.[165]

The final cementing of relations between Fisher and the King came with the appointment of Fisher as naval aide-de-camp on the suggestion of Selborne. The King was at first enthusiastic but then decided against it, as he feared opposition might be aroused over Fisher's holding two offices. However, on October 21, 1904, the day Fisher became First Sea Lord, the King finally agreed to the proposal. This was an important decision because, by holding both offices almost until the end of Edward's reign, Fisher had the paramount naval influence over the King.[166]

On Trafalgar Day, 'Jackie' Fisher picked up the reins at the Admiralty. What could be expected? He came, as has been seen, with a definite philosophy about Britain's role as a naval power. Naval supremacy meant first of all the protection of the British Isles against invasion, and secondly, the protection of British trade routes.[167] These necessitated an

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[165] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., (Letter to Esher - October 1904), 329. When Selborne retired on March 6, 1905 he was succeeded by Lord Cawdor, who remained until the resignation of the Unionist Government in December 1905. Lord Tweedmouth became First Lord in the Liberal Government.

[166] Ibid., V.I, 327 ff.

[167] Viscount Esher, The Influence of King Edward and Essays on Other Subjects, (London, 1915), p. 155.

an efficient navy which the Royal Navy in 1904 was not, but in the course of a very few years it was to become. It meant that a thorough shaking of the naval edifice was required to remove the lethargy that had been accumulating for so many decades.

In 1903, at a Royal Academy Banquet, Fisher said that "the Navy and the Admiralty are realizing -- that on the British Navy rests the British Empire".[168] What did this mean? Simply that the edifice stands only so long as the naval foundation is strong, and Fisher ever let it be known that where he found weakness he intended to remove it.

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[168]Lord Fisher, Records, p 82 f.

CHAPTER IV

YEARS OF REFORM, 1904 TO 1906.

October 21st, 1904, was a joyous or infamous day in naval annals, depending upon whether one was a progressive or a conservative, for at that time Fisher came to power determined to play the role of Athanasius contra mundum, and determined to win. The proposed reforms, outlined in the Selborne Memorandum of December 12, 1904, now awaited execution, and probably no one was expecting quite the violent eruption that occupied the naval scene from 1905 to 1909.

Although he favoured a large navy, Fisher realized that there were limits to the size of the fleet that Britain could adequately maintain. The Navy Estimates had been steadily rising[1] and it was no secret that pressure was building up against further increases. As early as 1903 agitation had begun for an end to the naval rivalry with the continental powers, even if it meant Britain leading the way in securing a settlement. Quite clearly many felt, and correctly, Fisher included, that while the Estimates were large they did not foster efficiency in the navy. If the cost of imperial defence was becoming too great a burden, and this appeared to be

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[1]For further information see Appendix VIII, p. 271.

the case, then obviously the only solution, apart from colonial aid which was not readily forthcoming, was economy, but an economy which did not hamper the building up of naval efficiency. This kind of an economy lay behind the Fisher reforms following 1904.

A scrapping policy already had been broached in the House of Commons before it was definitely ascertained that he would succeed to the Admiralty.[2] There was also a re-orientation of the 'two power standard' in 1904 when Pretyman[3] announced that in future, "this principle must be broadly applied, not solely to particular units or particular ships ....,"[4] which indicated that the emphasis would be placed upon the quality and power of ships, and not merely upon a striving for twice the number to be found in the navies of the next two strongest sea powers. This new power standard concept however was to be limited to battleships, as was laid down by Selborne who, speaking in Glasgow on April 1, 1903, said that, "the standard applies only to battleships because in the

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[2]P.D. - 4 Ser. - V. 130, 1904, 1338.
See also: Lord Brassey, "Our Naval Strength and The Navy Estimates", Nineteenth Century, October 1904, p. 592 f.

[3]E.G. Pretyman, 1860 to 1931.
Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty 1903 to 1905.

[4]P.D. - 4 Ser. - V. 130, 1904, 1259.

matter of cruisers there can be no equality."[5] Cruisers were excluded because they were built, not to fight in the line of battle, but to protect trade, commerce, and the merchant marine. Hence for Britain, having by far the largest merchant fleet -- a total tonnage of 16,000,000 as compared with 17,500,000 for the rest of the world, including 1,500,000 on the Great Lakes -- the standard of cruiser strength could not be a comparative one.[6]

Such was the economy-conscious atmosphere that prevailed when Fisher became First Sea Lord, and he set himself to apply the axe to all branches of the navy where inefficiency was rife, and in turn to build up efficiency by using more wisely the money provided by the yearly Estimates. He planned to increase the fighting strength of the navy by at least thirty per cent, while at the same time reduce the Estimates by many millions.[7] He laboured under no delusions as to the opposition he would encounter, especially from the small, but vocal, 'large navy' clique. However, he was confident of success and wrote to Selborne that the 1905 Estimates could be reduced by £4,000,000. This estimate was very accurate, the

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[5]Ibid., V.130, 1904, 1259.

[6]Ibid., V.130, 1904, 1260.

[7]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Knollys - August 1904), 327.

reduction being £3,500,000.[8]

Fisher's major reforms were four in number, being:

I. The Nucleus Crew Scheme.

II. The Scrapping of Obsolete Warships.

III. The Redistribution of the Fleet.

IV. The Dreadnought Policy.

The first three of these proposed reforms were announced in an Admiralty Memorandum of December 6, 1904,[9] and the fourth proposal was also then foreshadowed. These were the changes upon which Fisher insisted before he would agree to go to the Admiralty, and it was to be 'all or nothing' for he felt the scheme must be instituted as a whole, for to institute only one or two of the proposals would be useless, as between the first three there was a very close interdependence. This was stressed by Pretyman when he put the scheme before the House of Commons on March 6, 1905.[10]

Before launching into an investigation of the Selborne Memorandum it is a propos here, first, to consider briefly

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[8] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Selborne - November 1904), 48.

[9] Commonly, and hereafter referred to as the Selborne Memorandum.

[10] P.D., - 4 Ser. - V.142, 1905, 437.

the shortage of naval reserve personnel by 1902 and the steps taken to rectify this shortage. An admission of such a shortage was made by Selborne when introducing the Estimates for 1902 to 1903, for it was apparent from them that reserve increases had not kept pace with that of the active list.[11] A committee was set up by Selborne to study the question of a Naval Volunteer Reserve, and it suggested the following four sources from which men could be drawn.

(i) Officers and men who had previously served with the Royal Navy or the Royal Marines. This reservoir however had been largely utilized, and its efficient strength was strictly limited. It formed the Royal Fleet Reserve and was extended by the Naval Forces Bill of 1903.

(ii) The Merchant Marine Service and the fishing industry.[12]

(iii) Skilled land workers with technical training.

(iv) Yachtsmen and amateur sailors.[13]

What was the reason for this shortage? The shortage seemed to stem from the fact that Whitehall did very little to

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[11] W.L. Clowes, "The Condition of The Naval Reserve", Nineteenth Century, April 1902, p. 550.

[12] The Merchant Marine formed the basis of the Royal Naval Reserve.

[13] W.L. Clowes, "The Condition of the Naval Reserve", Nineteenth Century, April 1902, p. 552 f.

encourage the Royal Naval Reserve; the authorities tended to look upon these men as an inferior breed, and provided them with the most obsolete training equipment.[14] The possible number of naval reserve volunteers was also limited as only British subjects residing in the United Kingdom were admitted, and if they worked on ships, then only those on ships registered in the United Kingdom. This provision was remedied however by a new Royal Naval Reserve Volunteers Bill with provisions allowing all British subjects, irrespective of domicile and whether they worked on ships registered in the United Kingdom or in one of the colonies, to serve in the Volunteer Reserve.[15] The Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve which utilized these men, started functioning in August 1903.

The only apparent answer to this personnel shortage seemed to be the introduction of short-service men, a scheme with which Fisher was much in sympathy. Under the old enlistment system bluejackets enlisted for a period of ten years, with the option, at the end of that time, of re-engaging for another ten years with a slight pay increase and a pension.

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[14] Ibid., p. 553 ff.

[15] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.109, 1902, 816 ff.
It is interesting to note that when Goshen was at the Admiralty he enrolled some Newfoundland fishermen in the Volunteer Reserve and actually had no legal right to do so.

This was later increased from twenty to twenty-five years, and it became easier for a bluejacket to rise in the ranks. He could become a warrant officer and perhaps, before retirement, a lieutenant on the active list.[16] The difficulty with this system was that it was very expensive and the fully trained men it provided were not required for all the duties on a modern ship -- partially trained men would do, and they would be less costly.[17] Fisher certainly realized this and the realization lay behind his 'nucleus crew' system.

Finally, the Naval Forces Bill, containing a short-service clause, was introduced into the House of Commons by Arnold-Forster. This Bill provided for:

(i) The employment of non-continuous or short-service men, whereby a man was to enroll for not more than twelve years on the condition that after a stipulated period of service in the Royal Navy he would serve the remainder of his time in the Royal Fleet Reserve. In practice this usually amounted to five years' active service, and seven years in the reserve.

(ii) The extension of the limit restricting membership in the Royal Naval Reserve (set at thirty thousand) and

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[16] F.T. Jane, The British Battle Fleet, (London, 1915, 2 V.), V.II, 252.

[17] Ibid., V.II, 252.

the Royal Fleet Reserve.

(iii) The enrollment of Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve men to serve as bluejackets. Volunteers so enrolled would, in time of war, be liable for service in any part of the world.[18]

The purpose of the short-service system was to increase the number of available men without much expenditure.[19] Fisher was very much in favour of this scheme, not only because he advocated economy, but because he realized that in many cases on a modern ship partially trained men were quite sufficient.[20] This new system therefore, provided for men to enter the active service for a period of five years, but with no prospect of promotion or pension, and then to go into the reserve.[21] Approval of the new scheme was by no means unanimous. Scott[22] was much opposed because he felt that the enrollment of short-

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[18] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.118, 1903, 1382 ff.

[19] The Naval Forces Bill became law, June 30, 1903.

[20] See: Lord Brassey, "Our Naval Strength and The Navy Estimates", Nineteenth Century, October 1904.

[21] F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 253.

[22] Admiral Sir Percy Scott, 1853 to 1924.
Commander of the gunnery school H.M.S. Excellent 1903 to 1905; Inspector of Target Practice 1905 to 1907; Commander of the Second Cruiser Squadron of the Channel Fleet 1907 to 1909. (Owing to a dispute with Beresford this squadron was detached from the Channel Fleet and sent on a special mission to South Africa.)

service men was one of the weaknesses in the German Navy.[23] Then there were others, like Goschen, who criticized the new scheme because it was new and was a departure from the traditional ideas.[24] Irrespective of whether short-service was right or wrong it was probably the only expedient which was capable of quickly increasing the reserve force, that at the same time did not greatly increase the Estimates. By 1904 the new scheme was working well, the entries into the reserves were satisfactory, and there was little doubt but that the new scheme was to remain in operation.[25]

Thus being assured of a programme which he thought would create the necessary number of reserves, plus, having provided a new education system designed to give officers adequate training, Fisher proceeded with the naval reformation.

The Selborne Memorandum, which outlined the proposed reforms, will be discussed under the headings listed on page 81.

I. THE NUCLEUS CREW SCHEME

Fisher called his system of nucleus crews "the keystone

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[23]Sir P. Scott, Fifty Years in the Royal Navy, (New York, 1919), p. 193. There was a difference however between the two navies, for the short-service men in the German Navy were on active duty for only three years, whereas under the British system active duty was for five years.

[24]P.D. - 4 Ser. - V. 153, 1906, 238.

[25]Ibid., V.130, 1904, 1262 ff.

of our preparedness for war",[26] and rightly so, for this was the first step in making the entire fleet instantly ready for war.[27] Under this new scheme all the ships in reserve that possessed any fighting value would have a nucleus crew on board to keep the essential fighting equipment in good order. This was a radical departure from the old system under which ships were either commissioned and therefore manned or else they were put in reserve and unmanned. This reserve was divided into:

1. The Dockyard Reserve. This took care of obsolete vessels and all others not likely to be commissioned except as a last resort. It also included ships undergoing very heavy repairs.

2. The Fleet Reserve. This was for ships undergoing minor repairs and available for service but not immediately required.

If the ships of the Fleet Reserve were to be available for service they would require crews but they possessed no crews at all during the time they were out of commission, having only a handful of men comprising a 'care-and-maintenance

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[26] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 23.

[27] Lord Fisher, Records, 147.

party'.[28] When a mobilization was called for, these ships each received a 'hodge-podge' crew, some members of which had much experience and some from the reserve having little, and generally all were unfamiliar with their assigned ship. The result was the only thing it could be -- gross inefficiency, due not so much to the men as to the system.

Obviously this reserve ship system had to be changed, but with what was it to be replaced? Fisher decided that if there was to be an effective war fleet, comprising both ships in commission and in reserve, then the ships in reserve would have to be maintained at a level whereby they were in some measure as efficient as those in commission.[29] He wanted, in effect, a 'fleet in commission in reserve', and this was achieved by putting a nucleus crew on board each reserve ship to insure that the vessel would be instantly ready for war. Each nucleus crew was to consist of two-fifths of the regular complement of both officers and men. These would include the captain, engine-room ratings, turret crews, gunners, and sight-

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[28]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 23. This maintenance party consisted of an engineer officer, a boatswain, a gunner, and a carpenter, and its main duty was to look after the stores. Periodically 'work parties' were sent on board to keep the ship clean, and the machinery, guns, and torpedoes in working order.
See: R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 287.

[29]R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 288.

setters.[30] These ships were to be stationed at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Sheerness, and each of the three divisions was to be under a rear-admiral, with the supreme command of the Reserve Fleet vested in a vice-admiral who was to be known as, "The Admiral in Command of the Home Fleet".[31] This Reserve Fleet went to sea periodically for manoeuvres, and the result was that the ships in reserve could now be useful should they be instantly required, and the nucleus crews were so arranged that each ship had a sufficient number of men to allow her to be thrown into service for a short period, should necessity demand it, without any augumentation of the nucleus crew. The intention was, however, that in the case of a general mobilization the crew of each ship would be raised up to standard by acquiring men from the instructional establishments at Portsmouth, Devonport, and Chatham.[32]

This system was a great improvement over its predecessor and was one of the few reforms of Fisher's that received general acceptance. He realized that it was not feasible to keep reserve ships fully manned because this would have involved much expense, and also, it was necessary for officers

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[30] Lord Fisher, Records, 147.

[31] R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 288 ff. Actually the Home Fleet lacked homogeneity, and remained split into three divisions, each under a rear-admiral, until 1907.

[32] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 23.

to take certain 'refresher' courses at one of the colleges, and thus keep abreast of modern naval developments. Neither was it practical to put ships into reserve without any crew at all and expect that they could mobilize instantly should the need arise. Fisher's scheme was a compromise.

Fisher introduced two other new innovations in his nucleus scheme. First, realizing that instant mobilization might create havoc and confusion with those enrolled in a training institution when they attempted to reach their designated ship, Fisher established an emergency or Special Service Squadron.[33] This involved the stationing at each of the three reserve ports, two battleships and two first-class cruisers, along with a sufficient number of men capable of manning any two of the ships. Thus, if necessary, six ships could be sent to sea instantly.[34] Secondly, Fisher reduced the length of the commissions for officers from three to two years, and during these two years there was to be no great transferring of officers or men. The result was familiarity

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[33]Such mass confusion resulted in 1897 when, owing to an emergency, a special squadron was hastily commissioned, consisting of two battleships, two first-class and two second-class cruisers, and not only was there crew trouble but it was found that the ships were ill-prepared to go to sea.

[34]R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 289 f.

and harmony while on board ship.[35]

The nucleus crew scheme caused little controversy, and those who criticized it, as did some who thought that criticism was fashionable, forgot that under this new system all ships possessing any fighting value had at least a partial crew, whereas before they had no crew at all. That the scheme was a success is shown by Jellicoe,[36] who stated that:

> ... it raised the general standard of the whole Navy in British waters, and facilitated the use of the Royal Fleet and Naval Reserves on the outbreak of war.[37]

There was however one great problem. The nucleus crew scheme presupposed a surplus of men, otherwise how is a partial crew to be placed on each ship in reserve? The answer was provided by Fisher's programme of scrapping obsolete vessels, and utilizing the men so made available for nucleus crews.

II. THE SCRAPPING POLICY

Fisher estimated that out of all of the vessels in

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[35]Lord Fisher, Records, p. 131. Prior to this reduction commissions were granted for a three year period but, as was very often the case, they extended over four or five years. This was a long time to expect a man to remain away from home, and so Fisher, always considering the human side of the navy, reduced commissions to two years. This he did in spite of the fact that it was more expensive, for it necessitated having more relief crews.

[36]Admiral Lord Jellicoe, 1859 to 1935.
Director of Naval Ordnance 1905; Third Sea Lord, 1908 to 1910; Second Sea Lord 1912 to 1914; C.-in-C. of the Grand Fleet 1914 to 1916; First Sea Lord 1916 to 1917.

[37]Lord Jellicoe, The Grand Fleet 1914 to 1916, (New York, 1919), p. 35.

commission only sixty-three were really worthy of being called fighting ships.[38] Yet these ships were kept in commission and were looked upon as providing for the safety of Britain and her Empire, and while they may have succeeded up to 1904 it was not due to the fighting efficiency of the ships, but to the fact that there was no power capable of challenging Britain on the sea. This did not mean however that British sea supremacy was going to remain forever unchallenged, for quite clearly, by 1904, Fisher and others saw, or thought they saw in the rising naval power of Germany, a direct challenge to their supremacy at sea.

Only ships of fighting value were useful in war, yet as long as ships were kept in commission much money had to be spent upon them, and this expenditure on the older vessels was wasted. Fisher appreciated this and in keeping with his principle of 'efficiency with economy' decided to remedy the situation by removing all obsolete vessels. This measure would provide him not only with men for the nucleus crew scheme, but also money which would enable him to finance his other proposed reforms.[39]

There were many ships that Fisher knew were absolutely

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[38]Lord Fisher, Records, p. 139.

[39]C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

useless, especially some of the small gun-boats, old re-armed battleships which were out-dated in armour and speed, and many of the second-class cruisers built under the Naval Defence Act of 1889. A special committee was set up to investigate all vessels not considered absolutely efficient, and the categories evolved and the number of ships recommended for disposal were as follows:

(i)	Ships past all use	90
(ii)	Those of some little use but which would soon be completely useless	37
(iii)	Those of some fighting value which would be allowed to keep their armour on board, but on which no future expenditure for upkeep was to be made	27
	Total	154 [40]

The committee provided for the removal of one hundred and fifty-four ships, their principle being that every ship kept in commission and upon which money was to be spent for upkeep purposes should be ready for instant war.[41] The majority of the ships it was proposed be scrapped were engaged in police work and in 'showing the flag',[42] tasks which were

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[40] R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 292 f.

[41] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.142, 1905, 438.

[42] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 24.

important but ones which Fisher felt could be carried on to the satisfaction of all concerned by the ships which would remain in commission. Then, too, not only was money saved on the vessels to be scrapped, but the removal of such ships from distant stations allowed for the closing of many bases, and thus enabled a further saving. In stressing economy Fisher was not frugal but he wanted money to be used in the most efficient possible manner and not squandered on non-essentials.

The removal of the obsolete vessels, or, as Fisher said, "all those ships which could neither fight nor run away",[43] meant that all the battleships in the China, Australia, and East India squadrons were withdrawn, leaving only cruisers in those areas. The Pacific, South Atlantic, and West Indies and North American squadrons were abolished. These withdrawals were possible owing to the amiable relations which had been established both with the United States and France. The United States, which was very interested in the Panama Canal, took over in the Caribbean.[44] This, in turn, meant the closing down of the facilities at Jamaica, St. Lucia, Halifax, Esquimalt, Ascension, and Trincomalee.[45] The result of all these

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[43] Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Beresford - February 1902), 233-234.

[44] C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

[45] R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 298. Halifax and Esquimalt, by agreement, were later taken over by the Canadian Government. At Ascension there remained a small force of Royal Marines to keep the guns in order.

withdrawals was that great economies were affected and the congestion in British harbours was alleviated. It meant too that worthless expenditure on the upkeep of obsolete ships was stopped, and money was saved with the cancellation of various work projects which were now no longer needed.[46] Fisher estimated that scrapping allowed the cancellation of a £13,000,000 works project, and that the over-all fighting efficiency of the fleet had been greatly increased.[47]

Unlike the nucleus crew scheme the scrapping policy was not so readily acclaimed, but Fisher did not expect that it would be. He fully realized that there would be many who would contend that every ship was vital, whether it was ten or a hundred years old, and that rather than reduce the number of ships, more should be added. Fisher planned to add new ships but they were going to be of a new, somewhat revolutionary design, and before this could be done all the useless hulks had to be dispensed with, and the only way, as he saw it, was to "wipe them out, and in a year no one will remember that they ever existed".[48]

The major criticisms of the scrapping policy were as

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[46]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 24.

[47]Lord Fisher, Records, p. 152.

[48]Ibid., p. 140.

follows:[49]

(i) With the removal of so many vessels there were not sufficient ships left at the various British stations throughout the world to carry out adequately the necessary police work, or, when the occasion demanded, to 'show the flag'. It meant a tremendous lowering of British prestige. Fisher did not agree and neither did Selborne who said that a sufficient number of ships had been left on every station to perform adequately the necessary imperial police duties. Furthermore, British prestige would not suffer as provision had been made for four cruiser squadrons to be employed in 'showing the flag' in force whenever it was deemed propitious to do so.[50]

(ii) Many ships were scrapped which in war-time would have been useful for trade protection purposes, and the Board of Admiralty was doing nothing about the building of small cruisers to replace those scrapped. Small ships, if was felt, would be necessary during a war because large cruisers and battleships could not be expected to chase after enemy commerce destroyers,

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[49]See: A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 28 f.

[50]W.H. White, "Is Our Reserve of War-Ships Ample", Nineteenth Century, May 1905, p. 710.

since they would be needed for other purposes.[51]

There was much truth in this criticism.

Fisher felt that in any future war trade route needs would be met, not by small ships, but by powerful cruiser squadrons, in which case small ships would be ineffective as far as trade protection was concerned. The obvious policy to be followed, therefore, was to build large armoured cruisers and to dispense as far as possible with the building of smaller ships. This is exactly what happened and for a few years the emphasis was on big ships, the principle being that fewer large ships were better than many small ones. Hence, in 1906 Fisher stopped the building of third-class cruisers, and this proved to be a mistake, and one not made by Germany, who "read the situation correctly for she saw the value of these boats, carrying torpedoes, against a battleship at night."[52]

There can be no doubt that in his scrapping policy Fisher went too far, and White estimates that of the total number of vessels removed at least twenty-six were of the modern type, and certainly the equal of any vessels in service in foreign navies.[53] Small ships, it was held, were needed to

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[51] Ibid., p. 715.

[52] F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 78.

[53] W.H. White, "Admiralty Policy and The New Naval Estimates", Nineteenth Century, April 1906, p. 607.

act as 'eyes' for the battle fleet, and it was a mistake to reduce the number of small ships and then turn away from building any more of them, especially when Germany was laying great stress on the value of such vessels.[54] Selborne felt however that war would not break out suddenly, there would first of all be a noticeable gathering of war clouds during which time Britain could send an appropriate number of large ships to the area of expected trouble, and thus dispense to a large extent with the use of small ships. Perhaps this might have worked but Britain certainly was not noted for anticipating trouble or of being fully prepared to cope with it when it appeared.

The result of this drastic reducing policy was that in World War I Britain was very short of small ships.[55] Certainly she did not have sufficient cruisers for trade protection purposes and the use of submarines against merchant shipping was an excellent example of a situation in which small ships would have been very useful. Britain once again began building small cruisers before 1914 but it was not until the eve of World War I that Fisher and a few others fully realized the use to which submarines could be put, but by that time it

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[54]W.H. White, "Is Our Reserve of War-Ships Ample", Nineteenth Century, May 1905, p. 715.

[55]On the shortage of destroyers, see Appendix IX, p.273.

was too late to augment the battle fleet with all the small ships it was then felt would be necessary.[56]

That many vessels were obsolete and not worth the money spent on their upkeep cannot be denied, but it was felt at the time by many observers, and the following years proved them correct, that the number of ships pulled out of service should have been much smaller.[57] It was also pointed out that while some of the ships taken out of commission were not to be scrapped, no money was to be spent upon them, yet they were supposed to be ready for duty in the case of an emergency. This was clearly impossible because unless money be spent on the upkeep of a vessel it cannot possibly be ready for service.[58] Others criticized the scrapping policy because they felt it would reduce the fighting strength of the navy, and it was thought that such reductions should not be made until some kind of naval agreement had been reached with the other naval powers.[59] Still, others felt that such naval agreements were not necessary because if Britain showed the other nations that she was willing to take the lead in navy reduc-

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[56] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 29.

[57] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.142, 1905, 451.

[58] Ibid., V.142, 1905, 1246. See also: W.H. White, "Admiralty Policy and The New Naval Estimates", Nineteenth Century, April 1906, p. 605.

[59] Ibid., V.142, 1905, 455 f.

tions, then her rivals would surely follow suit.[60] Haldane, however, supported the scheme because he thought that it provided a new interpretation of the old 'two power' concept. The stress in future was to be not on the number of ships but on quality.[61] Approval also came from Lord George Hamilton.[62] Sir John Colombe,[63] however, was not so enthusiastic because he considered it a mistake to remove the Pacific Squadron and rely almost wholly upon the Japanese Alliance for the protection of British interests in the Far East. This Alliance, he felt, would last only so long as it suited Japan.[64]

The violent shaking of the naval edifice was underway, and the thought that it had just begun was enough to terrify the 'old fossils'. The great scrapping reform was brought about, said Balfour, by "one courageous stroke of the pen",[65] but the fact that Fisher went too far was substantiated by Jellicoe who remarked that:

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[60] Ibid., V.142, 1905, 457 f.

[61] Ibid., V.142, 1905, 471.

[62] Ibid., V.142, 1905, 1268.

[63] Sir John Colombe, 1839 to 1909.
Royal Marines 1854 to 1860. Prominent imperialist much concerned with problems of imperial defence.

[64] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.142, 1905, 1286. See also: A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Prince of Wales to Fisher - November 1904), 48.

[65] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 24.

> ... if this country in future decides to rely for safety against raids or invasion on the Fleet alone, it is essential that we should possess a considerably greater margin of superiority over a possible enemy in all classes of vessels than we did in August, 1914.[66]

Besides his scrapping policy Fisher turned his attention to the reforming of the dockyards where for many years conditions had been very chaotic. There was much congestion in the Royal Dockyards and inefficiency of operation.[67] The dockyard resources were largely wasted in repairing obsolete ships,[68] but with one hundred and fifty-four ships withdrawn from active service there would be, in future, room in the dockyards for the commissioned vessels needing repairs. Fisher also extended the practice, begun in 1903, of sending a large number of ships to be repaired in private or contract yards.[69] He introduced economy into dockyard operations and reduced the number of employees.[70] The emphasis in future was to be placed upon rapid construction which, it was felt, would allow a better utilization of capital, since the money expended

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[66]Lord Jellicoe, op. cit., p. 33.

[67]The Royal Dockyards were those at Portsmouth, Chatham, Devonport, Sheerness, and Pembroke.

[68]Lord Brassey, "Our Naval Strength and The Navy Estimates", Nineteenth Century, October 1904, p. 603.

[69]P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.119, 1903, 873-875.

[70]From June 1903 to May 1905 the number of discharges from the Royal Dockyards for reasons other than misconduct, and not including those hired for casual employment, was 7232. See: P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.146, 1905, 464.

is only fruitful when the ship enters the line. A rapid building pace would also permit economy because if ships were built quickly it would not be necessary to lay down so many at once.[71]

The reduction in the number of ships in commission and the closing down of many naval establishments necessitated a redistribution of the fleet, and this constitutes the third reform as outlined in the Selborne Memorandum.

III. THE REDISTRIBUTION OF THE FLEET

It was impossible for Britain to maintain as many ships as she might wish so as to give adequate protection to all her interests. There were certain vital points that had to receive first consideration and once these had been decided upon, then a concentration of power follows. As for her other points of interest Britain had to rely upon the mobility of her fleet.[72]

By 1904 Britain was becoming much perturbed over the growth of the German Navy, fearing that should hostilities break out the British Home Fleet was not strong enough to insure a victory over the German 'risk fleet'. The Germans realized this for it was the theory behind their 'risk fleet'

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[71] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.142, 1905, 441-442.

[72] A.S. Hurd, "Naval Fashions", Nineteenth Century, November 1901, p. 759.

that Britain would remain isolated, and her overwhelming naval superiority would be somewhat negativized by the fact that she had to scatter her naval forces all over the world. It was quite true that in the event of a war Britain would recall the greater part of her foreign squadrons but, as Admiral von der Goltz observed:

> "... that would be a matter of time, and then all the stations oversea could not be abandoned. On the other hand, the German Fleet, though much smaller, can remain concentrated in European waters".[73]

Fortunately this line of reasoning was not the exclusive monopoly of the Germans for Fisher too saw that under the then existing fleet redistribution it was more than possible that, in the event of hostilities, the Germans could gain the upper hand. There had to be a drastic change, a concentration of power in home waters because the next naval battle would be fought in the North Sea. Fisher sought, therefore, to follow the Nelsonic principle that "the battle ground should be the drill ground".[74]

A change in the distribution of the fleet was made possible because England had left her state of isolation. The Japanese Alliance of 1902, to which Fisher was opposed, allowed for the reduction of British squadrons in the Far East, and

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[73]A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, German Sea-Power, p. 122.

[74]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 25.

the Entente with France of 1904 removed the fear of a hostile France gaining naval supremacy in the Mediterranean. It was quite apparent by 1904 that, with these two agreements, and faced with the rise of a powerful German fleet, the existing distribution of the fleet was obsolete. Fisher, as early as 1902, was complaining that the distribution of the fleet was ludicrous.[75]

Prior to 1904 the British distribution system was as follows:

(i) The squadrons in the Pacific and South Atlantic.

(ii) The Mediterranean Fleet, consisting of twelve battleships. These ships were of the latest and most powerful type, and were stationed in the Mediterranean to guard against France.[76] This fleet was based on Malta.

(iii) The Channel Fleet, consisting of eight battleships and based on Gibraltar. This fleet was not always found in the Channel.

(iv) The Home Fleet, consisting of light battleships of the oldest types. This fleet was the first line of defence in home waters against Germany.[77]

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[75] Ibid., V.I, 233-234.

[76] A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, op. cit., p. 108.

[77] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 25.

This system was designed to give a concentration in the Mediterranean, checking any French ambitions in that direction, but by 1904 conditions had drastically altered, and a new scheme, shown below, was introduced by Fisher following the scrapping of the one hundred and fifty-four vessels.

(i) The squadrons in the Pacific and South Atlantic were abolished. There were five battleships to remain in the China Sea but these were ordered home in June, 1905.

(ii) The Channel Fleet -- this was the old Home Fleet. The number of battleships was increased to ten, all of the new types. This fleet was based on Dover and was to cruise between the coast of Ireland and Gibraltar.

(iii) The Atlantic Fleet -- this was the old Channel Fleet. The number of battleships remained at eight but they were now to be of the latest types. This fleet was based on Gibraltar and was, as needed, to reinforce either the Channel or the Mediterranean Fleet.

(iv) The Mediterranean Fleet, based on Malta, was to have its battleships reduced from twelve to eight.[78]

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[78] Ibid., V.II, 25. See also: R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 295-298. Bacon gives a different set of figures for the strengths of the various British Fleets. Other figures are quoted by S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 328.

(v) The Cruiser Squadron was to consist of six ships, to be used during peace time as a training squadron and for purposes of 'showing the flag' in such places as the West Indies and South America. In the event of war these ships were to join either the Mediterranean or the Channel Fleet.[79]

The result of this redistribution was that Fisher created three large fleets in home waters with a greater concentration of power in the North Sea than had hitherto been the case. This, however, was only the beginning for later, in 1906, he undertook the complete reorganization of the fleets in home waters.

Much opposition was aroused by this new scheme. Even Tirpitz was somewhat alarmed, for he felt that the German fleet was "too small to explain such measures as the concentration of British squadrons in the North Sea".[80] Hanotaux[81] was much enthused over the redistribution and claimed that "nothing to compare with it has ever been seen in history".[82] This was a somewhat exaggerated statement, yet France had every

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[79]R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 297-298.

[80]Von Tirpitz, Memoirs, V.I, 264.

[81]G. Hanotaux, 1853 to 1944.
French Ambassador to Constantinople 1885; Foreign Minister 1894 to 1895, 1896 to 1898.

[82]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 51.

reason to show satisfaction considering that, owing to the attitude of Germany, she now had the support of Britain. Balfour[83] too had high praise for the scheme and speaking at Glasgow, January,1905, said:

> "The result of these changes taken together is that I believe the fighting power of the British fleet during the first twenty-four hours, let us say, of hostilities with a foreign Power have been augmented, not once or twice, but threefold".[84]

The redistribution of the fleet was a recognition by the Board of Admiralty of the need for vital changes in the defence scheme. The strengthening of the Home (Channel) Fleet plus the increase in the number of ships in service now manned by nucleus crews, considerably increased the strength in home waters. The building up of the reserve fleet was important not only for the sake of preparedness but because it allowed a reduction in the Estimates. Fisher never let economy replace efficiency but he saw, where many others did not, that the Estimates had to be reduced, and that there was "no justification for keeping such an immense Naval Force in full

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[83] A.J. Balfour, 1848 to 1930.
Secretary to the Marquess of Salisbury at the Foreign Office 1878 to 1880; President of the Local Government Board 1885 to 1886; Secretary for Scotland 1886 to 1887; Secretary for Ireland 1887 to 1891; Prime Minister 1902 to 1905.

[84] A.S. Hurd, "The Government and The Navy", Nineteenth Century, November 1906, p. 739.

service at sea ...."[85] Hardinge[86] however was a little dubious of the new scheme and tended to feel that the readiness and fighting strength of the fleet had been diminished. Fisher repudiated this and stressed that in all aspects the readiness and efficiency of the fleet had been increased, and he pointed out that while it might be pleasant to have British gunboats scattered the world over the pleasure would soon diminish when Estimates of £100,000,000 were presented.[87] When it came to such matters as redistribution Fisher contended that such a problem was for the Admiralty alone to solve and irrespective of what the politicians and others might think of it they were in no way competent to judge. With this point of view Robertson[88] concurred.[89]

The new British concentration in home waters caused much concern in Germany, especially since it was followed by

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[85] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - October 1906), 94.

[86] Sir Charles Hardinge, 1858 to 1944.
Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1903; Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1906 to 1910; 1916 to 1920; Ambassador to Russia 1904 to 1906; Viceroy of India 1911 to 1916; Ambassador to France 1920 to 1922.

[87] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 106-107.

[88] E. Robertson (Later Baron Lochee), 1845 to 1911.
Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1892 to 1895; Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty 1905 to 1908.

[89] E. Robertson, "Some Naval Questions", Nineteenth Century, January 1905, p. 152.

an announcement by the French Government indicating their intention of increasing the French naval programme.[90] There were some in Germany who sought to point out that the English fear of Germany was not due to the economic, but rather to the naval competition. This was stressed by Bernstorff, the German chargé d'affaires in London, as early as April, 1904.[91] The same sentiments were echoed by Bülow who said of the Selborne Memorandum that it was, "a concession to English public opinion, more and more agitated because of our own ship-building".[92] In spite of this both Tirpitz and the Kaiser remained adamant.

Such were the three reforms outlined in the Selborne Memorandum and presented to the House of Commons on March 6, 1905. It was emphasized that the reforms formed an organic whole and should not be judged separately. The object was to concentrate ships in homogeneous squadrons near home waters, and to rely very heavily, should hostilities break out, upon fleet mobility, modern communication facilities, and the high steaming capacity of the ships.[93] These changes, in part at

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[90] E.L. Woodward, Great Britain and The German Navy, p. 85.

[91] Ibid., p. 86.

[92] Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 69.

[93] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.142, 1905, 436-437.

least, were responsible for a reduction of £3,500,000 in the 1905 Estimates.

The new arrangement was praised for providing enough men through the scrapping of obsolete ships to keep the new fleets in home waters in full commission. This was especially important for the new Channel Fleet which now formed the first line of defence. Hitherto the ships in home waters were always losing a percentage of their crews for one reason or another and having them replaced with untrained seamen. Under the new two-year commission system the crews, both officers and men, were to remain intact for that period.[94] There was still a problem however as far as manpower was concerned because the great increase in the size of the ships meant that more men were required to man them. Even by 1905 it was pointed out that:

> ... the increase in the number, size, and horse-power of the ships in commission has more than swallowed up the increase in personnel.[95]

This was a very serious problem and one not solved before World War I, and Jellicoe, in The Grand Fleet, frequently comments upon the shortage of all classes of men.

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[94] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 85.

[95] E. Robertson, "Some Naval Questions", Nineteenth Century, January 1905, p. 153.

The changes were approved by Goschen who felt that the new strategic distribution of the fleet showed that the Admiralty were well abreast of the changes in the international situation.[96] Cawdor too was most enthusiastic and he estimated that under the new system, with the economies it effected, the Admiralty were enabled to keep sixteen more fighting ships in full commission and one hundred and fifty-four in partial commission.[97] There were others however who were not so certain that the changes were beneficial. Some wanted reduced Estimates but not at the expense of closing down any of the naval bases![98] Still others favoured a concentration of ships, not in home waters, but rather in Indian waters so that British interests in the Far East could be protected.[99] This was a gross misunderstanding of the international situation.

There were also complaints that the amount of dockyard work had been reduced,[100] but this was hinted at in the Selborne Memorandum, and the discharges from the dockyards

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[96] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.153, 1906, 236.

[97] Ibid., V.153, 1906, 253.

[98] Ibid., V.142, 1905, 615-616.

[99] A. Clarke, "Our Naval Position in The Eastern Seas", Nineteenth Century, January 1902, pp 2-8.

[100] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.152, 1906, 1359.

were part of the economy programme. Surely it was too much to expect that after so many ships had been struck off the active list, most of them to be sold, that there should be no decrease in the amount of repair work at the dockyards, thus allowing for a reduction in staff! Many critics were so taken by the suddenness and scope of the reforms that they jumped to the conclusion that the changes were very haphazard and ill-thought out. This however was not the case and Fisher pointed out in a letter to Tweedmouth that these reforms were known and approved in principle by Selborne before he, (i.e. Fisher), accepted the position of First Sea Lord. He wrote:

> ... I put before him every single one of the Reforms that have already been carried out, those still in progress, and those yet to come ... all these Reforms were based on years of careful consideration and discussion with the best brains of the Service.[101]

These reforms were not thought out on the spur of the moment for Fisher for several years had been advocating similar changes, but there is no doubt that here, as with his training scheme, his methods aroused much opposition. Those in the navy were not used to having such a dynamic individual at their head, and when he said, upon becoming First Sea Lord, that he was going to take a hundred brooms to the Admiralty and sweep out all the dust and cobwebs that had collected over

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[101] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - October 1906), 95.

the past century, he meant it, and he did not intend to sweep gently so as to avoid stirring up opposition. One had to 'paint with a big brush', and above all to be 'violent', -- he was!

It may have been that Fisher again went too far too quickly, as he had with the withdrawal of obsolete ships, but he was one of the few who realized that successful naval defence depended upon fleet mobility. Fleet distribution must change as does the international situation.[102] Fisher was not the first, or the only one of his day, to stress the importance of mobility, but he was the one person who was prepared to act with vigor and bring about the necessary changes. By 1904 political circumstances had considerably altered from what they had been twenty or thirty years before, and this made the new fleet redistribution a most timely move. There was now a greater concentration of power in home waters where it was required, and with the nucleus crew system it was possible to maintain an efficient ship reserve.

IV. THE DREADNOUGHT POLICY

The plans for building a revolutionary new type of battleship were not announced openly in the Selborne Memorandum,

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[102]A.S. Hurd, "The Government and The Navy", Nineteenth Century, November 1906, p. 738.
Lord Tweedmouth became First Lord of the Admiralty in December, 1905, in the new Liberal Government.

but it was hinted there that some new ship designs were being considered. With the reduction in the numerical size of the fleet as a result of the scrapping of so many obsolete vessels, it was necessary that some replacements should be made, and Fisher was anxious to provide nothing but first-class ships. Also, as he was not inclined towards the building of small ships, feeling that in the next war the role of the small 'light cruiser' type craft would be negligible, this meant a concentration on the building of large battleships. Fisher was interested not in quantity but in quality and the new ships were to be built in accordance with the purpose for which they were desired.

What kind of a ship did Fisher want? He wanted one combining great fire-power with speed, and incorporating all the latest scientific developments.[103] He wanted a ship which could be both a commerce and a battleship destroyer, one which could hit and hit hard, and, owing to its great speed was not likely itself to be hit. If such a ship could be produced, one which would make all the existing types appear obsolete, then a few of these new vessels could perform the duties which

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[103]Three things must be considered in a fighting ship--speed, armour, and armament. It is not possible to have all three in large amounts, and if the stress is on speed and fire-power, then armour must be sacrificed. If, however, a heavily armoured ship is required then speed must be sacrificed.

had previously required a large number of the older types. Fisher stressed that Britain had always subordinated her strategy to her ship construction, but the time had come when this practice had to be reversed. Strategy should dictate warship design. Fisher wrote:

> Strategy should govern the types of ships to be designed. Ship designs, as dictated by strategy, should govern tactics. Tactics should govern details of armaments.[104]

Fisher realized that certain very important decisions had to be made before any such vessel as he planned could be built. The battle range of the ship had to be decided upon, and this in turn would govern the calibre of the guns. A longer battle range than hitherto considered necessary was desirable owing to the increase in the effective range of torpedoes, which by 1905 was estimated at seven to eight thousand yards. Also, since much emphasis was to be placed upon accurate gunnery, this necessitated the employment of guns of a uniform calibre because with salvo-firing, range and accuracy could not be adequately determined if the ship carried mixed armaments.[105] These were the problems about which Fisher was thinking when he joined the Admiralty, and he came with very definite ideas, which were later embodied

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[104]Lord Fisher, Records, p. 144.

[105]R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.II, 251-253.

in the Dreadnought and Invincible.[106]

This need for a new type of fighting ship was not new to Fisher. Barnaby intimates that as early as 1885 Fisher was thinking in terms of dreadnoughts.[107] Certainly when he was C.-in-C. in the Mediterranean,[108] and giving lectures to his officers, he expounded upon the importance of speed, "which is the first desideratum in every class of fighting vessel".[109] Stress was placed upon the uniformity of armaments which were to be chosen according to the use to which the ship was to be put.

> Do we arrange the armament to meet the proposed mode of fighting? Doesn't it sometimes look like so many of each sort, as if you were peopling the Ark, and wanted representatives of all calibres?[110]

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[106]The Dreadnought was an 'all big gun' battleship. It was heavily armed and capable of speeds in excess of any other battleship of its day. In order to obtain great fire-power and speed, some protective armour was sacrificed. The Invincible was an armoured or battle-cruiser with armament similar to that of the Dreadnought but with a further sacrifice of protective armour, thus giving even greater speed. The term battle-cruiser will be employed throughout when referring to the Invincible type ship, although prior to 1911 such ships were known as armoured cruisers. Also the term armoured ship and dreadnought will be hereafter used in a general way to include both the Dreadnought and the Invincible type ships.

[107]Lord Fisher, Memories, (Letter to Fisher - January 1910), p. 249.

[108]1899 to 1902.

[109]Lord Fisher, Records, p. 91. See also: A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Selborne - December 1900), 174.

[110]Ibid., p. 91.

Over the course of a few years naval tactics and strategy had been drastically altered. Whereas for centuries the course of action was largely determined by the wind, now such decisions were made by the human mind.[111] This fact Fisher realized had not been fully grasped even by 1904, but there was no time for any further delay. New conditions required new types of ships and there had to be "a thorough routing out of old tradition as to what should be put into a ship".[112]

Thinking about such changes would not bring them into being: the new ideas had to be adopted. As previously mentioned a special Designs Committee, presided over by Fisher, was set up and was first announced in November 1904.[113] This Committee was to begin work early in 1905 and on the basis of what the Admiralty considered to be the desirable requisites in a war vessel, they were to choose a design which would meet all the necessary qualifications.[114] This Committee invoked Fisher's principle of having the type of vessel subordinated to the strategical considerations. The Committee

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[111] Ibid., p. 92.

[112] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Selborne - January 1901), 177.

[113] For further details concerning the members of this Committee, see Appendix X, p.274.

[114] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 98.

considered six variations of design, and had a great advantage in that they were able to rely upon the opinions not only of the gunnery expert, Sir Percy Scott, but also upon those of the Japanese naval experts.[115] It was no secret that such a Committee had been set up to consider questions of armament and tonnage. Early in December 1904, the German Naval Attaché in London reported that Vickers had plans for a battleship having ten or twelve 12-inch guns.[116] There is a possibility however, that these plans referred to a vessel of the King Edward VII class, not to the future Dreadnought.[117]

The Designs Committee reached a decision in March, 1905, and the keel-plate of the new vessel was laid down in October. The ship was launched in February, 1906, and went to sea for trials in October, 1906. This was the Dreadnought, a ship which was to set the basic pattern of battleship design. The following table gives the specifications of the new ship.

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[115] Ibid., p. 108. Japan was engaged in a war with Russia, and the decisions reached by the Japanese naval experts were made available to the Committee. This will be considered at a later stage.

[116] Ibid., p. 113.

[117] The ships of the King Edward VII class were the last, and largest, of the pre-Dreadnought type battleships. Details are given further on.

Displacement	17,900 tons.
Length	526 feet.
Beam	82 feet.
Maximum draught	29 feet.
Armament	10 12-inch guns.
	27 12-pounders
	5 18-inch torpedo tubes (submerged).
Armour	11 inches (maximum thickness).
Engines	23,000 H.P. (turbines).
Speed	21 knots.
Fuel (coal)	900 tons (maximum 2000 tons)[118] also some oil was carried.[119]

The cost of the Dreadnought was £1,797,497, including £113,200 spent for the guns. An additional £17,000 was spent in making the necessary alterations to the Portsmouth building slip, where the vessel was constructed.[120]

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[118] F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 150.

[119] For several years Fisher had advocated the adoption of oil fuel. Not only would it be more convenient but it would also help to solve the personnel shortage, because, he estimated, only half as many stokers would be required. In the Dreadnought they were experimenting with oil.
See: A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letters to Selborne) 220, 228, 234.

[120] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.155, 1906, 161.

This ship had several advantages over her predecessors. A speed of twenty-one knots was two knots faster than that of any other battleship built or building. She was the first ship to embody the 'all big gun' principle, the only secondary armament being small anti-torpedo-boat guns. This was in contrast to the last pre-Dreadnought ship which had a mixed armament of four 12-inch and four 9.2-inch guns.[121] Also the Dreadnought was the first warship to be equipped with turbine engines.

The Designs Committee also put forth plans for a battle-cruiser, designed to act as a commerce raider, as a fleet escort, and to help battleships already engaged with enemy battleships. This ship, the Invincible, had lighter armour, but greater speed than the Dreadnought. The main specifications of this new battle-cruiser were:

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[121] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 25-26.

Displacement	17,250 tons.
Length	562 feet.
Beam	78½ feet.
Draught	29 feet.
Armament	8 12-inch guns
	16 4-inch guns
	3 submerged torpedo tubes.
Armour	7 inches maximum.
Engines	41,000 H.P. (turbines).
Speed	25 knots.
Fuel (coal)	1,000 tons (maximum 3,000 tons) also some oil.[122]

In size the Dreadnought was not much larger than her immediate predecessor, but to a certain extent the size of this new ship was determined by the available docking facilities. Germany, when she started to build ships of the same type, built her docks first so as to be certain of having adequate facilities. Had Britain done this however, she probably would not have gained her margin of superiority because it would have involved a considerable delay, during which time other nations might well have commenced an armoured-ship programme.[123] The real change exemplified by the Dreadnought

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[122] F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 165.

[123] Lord Jellicoe, op. cit., pp. 314-315.

was that she was "far more suited than her predecessors for destroying enemy ships under conditions which would hold in modern war."[124] Not everyone was convinced of this however, and so emminent a person as Sir Philip Watts was opposed to the new building policy. A suggestion that Watts present a paper to the House of Commons on the Dreadnought policy was rejected.[125] In fact, during the building of the Dreadnought very little information was available and many members of the House of Commons complained about the dearth of information concerning the new ship designs.

Was the Dreadnought a success? Fisher claimed that it was a phenomenal success.[126] In the sea trials however the ship barely made its prescribed speed of twenty-one knots, although this was largely due to the engine-room complement being unfamiliar with all the machinery. A few months later a speed of twenty-two knots was easily attained.[127] Success was also achieved in drastically shortening the time required to build a battleship. The Dreadnought was not built in twelve months, as first appearances would indicate, for the

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[124] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 107.

[125] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.156, 1906, 214.

[126] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - October 1906), 101.

[127] F.T. Jane, op. cit., 154.

material for the ship began to be gathered months ahead of time.[128] It was estimated that material, such as guns, mountings, boilers, armour, and propelling machinery, amounting in value to approximately eighty-five per cent of the total cost of the ship was put out to contract. This contract system proved so effective that it was to remain.[129]

The idea of an 'all big gun' ship did not originate with Fisher, or in Britain, but rather it was an idea prevalent in many countries by 1904. Fisher, however, was the first to capitalize upon it. The Dreadnought decision was influenced largely by the teachings of the Russo-Japanese War, and by the ideas of Cuniberti.[130] The Russo-Japanese War had a great effect upon British naval thought, although as far as Fisher was concerned it merely confirmed ideas with which he had been toying for several years. British naval officers were allowed on board Japanese warships to watch the decisive naval battle. The major fact established by this war, especially by the

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[128] Ibid., V.II, 149.

[129] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.154, 1906, 739. In order to have the Dreadnought completed by the specified date, some of the 12-inch guns originally intended for the Lord Nelson were used. See: F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 126.

[130] Cuniberti.
Constructor to the Italian Navy.

Battle of Tsushima,[131] was that in future,

> ... naval engagements can, and will, be fought at greater distances than were formerly considered possible. Hence the medium armament is held by many authorities to lose much of its value.[132]

Fisher perceived that the Japanese Navy triumphed over the Russians because it was more highly concentrated and better trained. The primary error of the Russians was not having a fleet in the Far East commensurate with their ambitions.[133] These factors influenced Fisher in his ideas on concentrating the British fleet in the North Sea, and in attempting to determine how large a fleet Britain needed. The supremacy of the battleship was definitely established, and so too was the great value of the torpedo-boat, although Mahan did not agree.[134] The other great factor, the value of which was demonstrated at Tsushima, was speed. Mahan favoured armour and armament in preference to speed, but not Fisher, who quite willingly sacrificed armour for speed. The Japanese ships were faster than the Russian, and the Russian Admiral Enquist, who escaped with three cruisers to Manila, felt that the superior speed of the Japanese ships contributed not a little to their great

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[131] Battle of Tsushima, May 27 to 28, 1905. Fought between the Russians under Rozhdestvensky, and the Japanese under Togo.

[132] A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, op. cit., p. 129.

[133] W.D. Puleston, Mahan, p. 259.

[134] Ibid., p. 247.

victory.[135] Fisher's view was substantiated in an interview with Yamamoto,[136] who said of Togo[137] that "superior speed gave him his victory".[138] The Japanese War, therefore, demonstrated the role to be played by the battleship, the advantages of speed, and the disadvantages of medium armament. The Dreadnought was built with these principles in mind. In future, both the big gun and the torpedo would be needed for the annihilation of the enemy, and by 1907 the medium 6-inch gun was on the way out in Japanese ships.[139]

The Russo-Japanese War thus demonstrated certain principles regarding the 'all big gun' type of ship, but even prior to this war, Cuniberti's ideas of such a ship were being aired, and had been published in 1903. They were, however, considered too ambitious for the Italian Navy.[140] The Japanese had laid down two battleships, the Aki and Satsuma, on Cuniberti's lines, and the United States had authorized the

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[135] A.S. Hurd, "Japan's Naval Development", Nineteenth Century, September 1907, p. 374.

[136] Admiral Yamamoto, 1852 to 1933.
Japanese Minister of Marine during the Russo-Japanese War.

[137] Admiral Togo, 1847 to 1934.
Japanese Naval Commander at Tsushima.

[138] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Leyland - September 1907), 137.

[139] C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

[140] F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 108.

building of the Carolina and the Michigan, both of which were to carry eight 12-inch guns. The specifications of these ships were public knowledge before the British Dreadnought was laid down,[141] but the British ship was completed before any others of her type.

The British Admiralty, even before the laying down of the Dreadnought, were building ships which marked the birth of the dreadnought era. These were the ships of the King Edward VII class of which eight were eventually built, five being completed before 1905.[142] These ships marked the end of the pre-Dreadnought era because, "in them the old idea of the two calibres, 12-inch and 6-inch died out and heavier auxiliary guns began to appear".[143] These ships however were not as successful as had been hoped because, "the two calibres of big guns rendered fire-control extremely difficult.[144] What

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[141] A.S. Hurd, "Japan's Naval Development", Nineteenth Century, September 1907, pp. 376-377.

[142] F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 134.

[143] Ibid., V.II, 146.

[144] The major specifications of the King Edward VII class were as follows:

Displacement	16,350 tons.
Length	453¾ feet.
Beam	78 feet.
Speed	18.9 knots.
Armament	4 12-inch guns. 4 9.2-inch guns. 10 6-inch guns.
Maximum draught	28¾ feet.
Armour	12 inches (maximum).

See: F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 107, 145-146.

was required therefore was a ship with uniform armament so that accurate observation of fire from a control tower aloft could be obtained. This could only be done by salvo-firing and, to be effective, salvo-firing required a uniform armament of eight or more heavy guns.[145] Long-range firing was aided also by the introduction of smoke-less powder, better gun-sights, and range-finders.[146] The end result was that the Dreadnought evolved out of Cuniberti's ideas, which to a large extent were tested during the Russo-Japanese War.

Credit for the idea of the 'all big gun' ship must be given to Cuniberti, but to Fisher must go the credit, not only for experimenting with this new idea, "but for looking into the future and translating the experiment into policy."[147] Fisher accepted what was inevitable, and it was not absurd for him to think that some other country, such as Germany, might anticipate the Dreadnought.[148] Fisher, therefore, sought to produce a ship which would combine all the qualities necessary in order to win a modern sea-battle -- speed, 'all big gun'

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[145]F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 107.

[146]C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

[147]R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.II, 254.

[148]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 114.

armament, and fire-control.[149] He felt that in any future war the winner would be that side having the largest ships with the largest number of big guns firing the heaviest projectiles over the greatest distance. The era of the modern battleship had arrived with the Dreadnought and Fisher realized that it was an era which would not quickly pass. Unfortunately not everyone saw things in the Fisher way, and perhaps of all his reforms his dreadnought policy sparked the most violent opposition.

The main criticism of the dreadnought policy was that "it rendered all existing battleships obsolete, so sweeping away Britain's overwhelming preponderance in battleships".[150] Clarke agreed and felt that such a policy, coming at a time when Britain had a great superiority in battleships, was dangerously misconceived.[151] The axiom of British building policy, said Clarke, should be, "never to lead in ship construction but always to follow with something better".[152] This stand

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[149]Jellicoe points out that although fire-control allowed one man to fire all the guns many officers were so sceptical of this new innovation that only a few ships were fitted with fire-control devices by 1914.
See: Lord Jellicoe, The Grand Fleet, p. 66.

[150]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, p. 29.

[151]Lord Sydenham, My Working Life, p. 208.

[152]Ibid., p. 209.

was taken up by Lloyd George who felt that Britain could always maintain her supremacy in battleships because of her greater building speed.[153] White complained that the Dreadnought only served to 'force the pace' sooner than was necessary.[154] Sir Frederick Richards was opposed on the grounds that these new ships were too expensive to build. Besides, no British Admiralty Board had ever before adopted such a radical policy in their shipbuilding programme.[155] This criticism amounted to a blanket condemnation of Fisher for most of the things he did had not hitherto been the practice! Even Mahan was opposed to this new policy which meant a "wilful premature antiquating of good vessels ..."[156]

All these criticisms contain a certain grain of truth. Certainly the Dreadnought reduced the fighting value of its predecessors. Fisher estimated that one dreadnought was the equal of two and one half older type battleships.[157] This too was Jellicoe's later opinion for he said that during World War I the pre-Dreadnought battleships were not a very important factor, owing to their inferior speed and the smaller amount of

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[153]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 105.

[154]W.H. White, "The New Naval Estimates", Nineteenth Century, April 1906, p. 613.

[155]Lord Sydenham, op. cit., p. 209.

[156]A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, op. cit., p. 136.

[157]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 30.

elevation permitted by the gun mountings.[158] It could not be denied that the new policy reduced Britain's numerical superiority in battleships. This benefitted Germany for "she did not have as large a fleet of old vessels to discard as did England and she could therefore concentrate a larger part of her building programme upon the heavier type".[159] It was folly, however, for Britain to rely upon superior building speed as an excuse for not taking the lead in building new ships. To do so implied that the building superiority of the British was to remain for all time, whereas even by 1904 to 1905 Germany was capable of building a battleship in just about the same time as England.[160] The skills and techniques of ship building were not the sole preserves of the British, even though men such as Clarke, Richards, and Lloyd George, liked to think them so. Fisher maintained that Britain, to keep her naval supremacy, had to build dreadnoughts first. She could not afford to leave the initiative to some other power, and then attempt to outbuild her rival.[161] The policy of watching and waiting to see what the other nations were

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[158] Lord Jellicoe, op. cit., p. 32.

[159] K.S. Pinson, Modern Germany, p. 300.
See also: E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 109.

[160] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 30.

[161] C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

going to do gave no security.[162]

There were also technical objections to the Dreadnought. Some critics stressed that it was wrong to sacrifice armour for purposes of speed. Mahan was of this school and he felt that the emphasis should be on gun-power rather than speed.[163] Fisher's view was, that by reducing the armour a ship could have both gun-power and speed. Speed, said Fisher, was strategically valuable in allowing a concentration at any given point as quickly as possible, and in chasing fleeing enemy ships. Tactically, great speed allowed a ship to choose its range of action and to keep outside the range of torpedoes. The evidence for Fisher's arguments, however, drawn from the performance of the Japanese fleet against the Russians, were not made public for security reasons.[164]

The other major technical objection arose over the removal of the medium armament. Mahan felt that naval strength would be more greatly increased if stress were placed, not on the 'all big gun' ship, but on smaller battleships carrying mixed armament.[165] He felt that there was an ideal size for a battleship, this 'ideal' being a smaller ship than the

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[162] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 110.

[163] W.D. Puleston, Mahan, p. 262.

[164] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 30.

[165] A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, op. cit., p. 133. Custance agreed with Mahan. See: A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to White - February 1906), 68.

Dreadnought, and one carrying guns of several calibres.[166] Mahan emphasized that the number of these 'ideal' ships possessed by a naval power would be the deciding factor in a future war. Fisher however did not stress the need for larger ships to the total exclusion of numbers. He increased the number of ships in home waters, for example, by redistributing the fleet, but he felt that it was impossible to have a great number of large ships and still reduce the Estimates. He settled therefore, for fewer ships of a larger size and a uniform armament, and thus succeeded in reducing the Estimates.[167] Uniformity of armament was seen by Fisher to be essential if a battleship was to carry out its primary function which was to destroy enemy ships. Commander Sims[168] agreed, and stated that:

> "... from the point of view of the efficiency of gun-fire alone, it would be unwise ever to build a man-of-war .... having more than one calibre of gun in her main battery".[169]

With the increased speed and the complete armour protection of the new type of ships, medium armament could inflict

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[166] W.D. Puleston, Mahan, p. 260.

[167] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 96.

[168] Commander Sims, 1858 to 1936. Inspector of Target Practice, United States' Navy.

[169] A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, op. cit., p. 133.

little or no damage against them.[170] It was also pointed out that the 6-inch guns proved very ineffective at Tsushima,[171] and therefore the main armament of the Dreadnought was to be ten 12-inch guns, plus some anti-torpedo-boat weapons.[172] In stressing the 'all big gun' principle however, Fisher went too far. It was later seen that the 6-inch guns were of some value, and they were put into the Iron Duke class of the 1911 to 1912 programme.[173] This increase in the calibre of the secondary armament became necessary as the torpedo range increased and destroyers became larger. Lambton[174] had been agitating for the return of the 6-inch gun, but not for the reasons cited above; he erroneously believed that it was the "endless stream of 6-inch shell which demoralized the Russians

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[170] Ibid., p. 134. Mahan later conceded this point and he came to accept many of Sims' ideas. See: W.D. Puleston, Mahan, p. 262.

[171] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.156, 1906, 949.

[172] The original Dreadnought carried 3-pounders, but the following models, up to the thirtieth, carried 16, or some 25-pounders (4-inch).
See: A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 31.

[173] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 31.

[174] Sir Hedworth Lambton (afterwards Sir H. Meux), 1856 to 1929.
Private Secretary to the First Lord 1894 to 1897; Commander of the Royal Yacht Victoria and Albert 1901 to 1903; 1904 to 1906; C.-in-C. of the China Station 1908 to 1910; C.-in-C. at Portsmouth 1912 to 1916; Admiral of the Fleet 1915.

at Tsushima".[175] The argument over the value of secondary armament continued to rage but Fisher was never convinced of its importance, even after it was decided to restore it. Fisher was much too busy thinking about big guns and larger ships to think about secondary armament.[176] At one time he planned to reduce the number of big guns on a dreadnought from ten to eight 12-inch guns, arranged in such a way so as to allow a one hundred per cent broadside fire.[177] The change did not take place in Fisher's time; in fact, while the number of guns remained at ten, the calibre was increased to 13.5-inches. This armament remained the standard until 1912 when the Queen Elizabeth mounted eight 15-inch guns.[178]

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[175]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 190. Hurd points out that the Japanese naval victory was not the result of fighting at a range of 6,000 to 7,000 yards, the range of a 6-inch gun, but at a range of 9,000 to 10,000 yards, by 9.2-inch, 10-inch, and 12-inch guns. See: A.S. Hurd, "The Government and The Navy", Nineteenth Century, November 1906, p. 736.

[176]He was planning larger ships and was much in accord with a paper written by the French Naval Architect, Le Boeuf, in which vessels of twenty-five thousand tons were advocated. Le Boeuf wrote: "In my opinion it would be better to have four powerful ironclads costing £2,600,000 each, than six mediocre ironclads at £2,000,000 each. There would be more actual power with less expenditure". This opinion of Le Boeuf, in essence, was the point of view of Fisher and the Designs Committee.

See: Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - September 1906), 88.

[177]Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Noble - April 1906), 74-75.

[178]Ibid., V.II, 74.

With the Dreadnought the theoretical ideas about the 'all big gun' ship were translated into reality and once this step had been taken there could be no going back. Fisher realized this, but he also realized that it was inevitable that, sooner or later, such a step would have to be taken. He felt that Britain, by taking the initial step, would gain more than she would lose because it allowed her to get the 'jump' on the other powers. Other nations would require one or two years to prepare themselves for the building of dreadnought-type ships, during which time Britain could acquire a commanding lead in building the new type of vessel. This was certainly a more realistic approach than that taken by Clarke and his cohorts. Clarke thought that there should have been a designs committee to decide upon the type of vessel to be built, but this was certainly an over-sight on his part as such a committee had been announced in December 1904. He felt too that the changes under Fisher had not been 'guided by reason', and that these changes were far "too great to rest on the unsupported opinions of a single Board of Admiralty".[179] However, whatever one feels about Fisher and his new building policy the fact remains that he did introduce changes when they were needed, and not years too late. It is of course

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[179]Lord Sydenham, op. cit., p. 300.

debatable as to whether such changes were needed at that time, but it was, by 1904, no secret to Fisher or to any other navy man that the next step in battleship construction was the 'all big gun' type. Fisher's actions show that he was abreast of his time, which in the eyes of the Royal Navy and its critics was tantamount to a cardinal sin.

The new dreadnought policy had an adverse effect on relations with Germany, which were not helped by Fisher, who, whenever the opportunity allowed, expounded upon how a few of his new ships could sweep the German ships from the seas. The Germans became obsessed with the idea of a second 'Copenhagen'.[180] The Dreadnought, however, had a great effect upon German naval thought.

The Germans had been building ships with a concentration upon secondary armament. These were now practically obsolete, and the German Admiralty was thrown into confusion.[181] Fisher's calculation that there would be a lengthy period before any foreign power would be able to lay down dreadnoughts proved to be correct, for "no battleship was laid down in Germany from

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[180] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 115. "Copenhagen" refers to the surprise attack upon the Danish Fleet, as it lay in harbour at Copenhagen, in 1801, by a British Fleet under Nelson.

[181] A.S. Hurd, H. Castle, op. cit., p. 138.

the summer of 1905 until July, 1907".[182] Tirpitz thought that the new English policy was based upon the assumption that Germany would not be able to build dreadnoughts owing to the narrowness of the Kiel Canal.[183] This certainly was not the guiding motive, although it was a thought which did not go unobserved by Fisher.

The major effect of the British dreadnought policy upon Germany was revealed in the new Navy Bill of 1906, which made provision for the construction of dreadnoughts. The new Navy Bill was the result of the German diplomatic defeat at the Algeciras Conference,[184] plus the British naval advances. The two elements combined, "gave the German Chauvinists the arguments they needed to urge with increased vehemence the necessity of great additions to their navy".[185] Besides making provision for the construction of dreadnoughts the Bill of 1906 also provided for the enlargement of the Kiel Canal.[186]

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[182] Ibid., p. 139.

[183] Von Tirpitz, Memoirs, V.I, 263.

[184] Algeciras Conference, January 16 to April 7, 1906. An international conference on Moroccan affairs which resulted in an agreement between France and Germany. Mention of this Conference is also made in Chapter V, Section (i).

[185] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 331.

[186] Ibid., V.II, 331.

Hence, Fisher's new building policy caused not only criticism at home, but confusion abroad. Meanwhile, besides these major reforms he had introduced into the Royal Navy, Fisher had also been investigating the value of submarines and torpedoes, and had taken steps to improve the gunnery of the fleet. These minor reforms are briefly noted under the following headings:

I. Submarines.

II. Torpedoes.

III. Gunnery.

I. SUBMARINES.[187]

By 1902 much experimentation with submersible craft had been carried out by the French. Many British authorities were very sceptical of the value of such boats and were hesitant, in 1902, to admit that the submarine age had arrived. Those in the navy were hesitant because the idea of the submarine, per se, was contrary to their sense of 'fair-play'. Also, should these boats prove to be practical, then the value of

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[187]The term submarine, as used here, refers to the British submersible torpedo boat, which could travel either on the surface or beneath the surface of the water. It was equipped with two engines, and had a greater radius of action than the French boats. The French, until after 1903, concentrated upon submarine boats which had a very limited radius of action and were equipped solely for travel beneath the surface.

See: A.S. Hurd, "The Success of The Submarine", Nineteenth Century, November 1903, pp. 711-721.

of the surface ships possessed by Britain, and upon which she had spent a fortune, would be lessened.[188] In spite of this the British officials could not ignore the existence of such craft, and five were constructed for experimental purposes.[189] All five were built under patent from the Holland Company of the United States since they were the only type available for purchase.[190] The submarine had come to stay however, and, besides the five original ones, twenty-four more were ordered between 1902 and 1904.[191] The British boats differed from their French counterparts in that they could 'dive' quickly, whereas the French boats sank very slowly on an even keel.[192]

Fisher was much interested in the development of the submarine and saw that it would play a vital role in a future war. Beresford thought of it as merely a passing fancy, and others, like Sir Arthur Wilson, "looked upon the submarine

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188A.S. Hurd, "The Coming of The Submarine", Nineteenth Century, February 1902, p. 222.

189Ibid. p. 221.

190P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.101, 1902, 959. Actually these five submarines were ordered without Parliamentary sanction.

191E. Robertson, "Naval Expenditure and Naval Strength", Nineteenth Century, April 1904, p. 601.

192A.S. Hurd, "The Coming of The Submarine", Nineteenth Century, February 1902, p. 225.

as an unethical, underhanded weapon, therefore as quite un-English".[193] Fisher, however, forged ahead and in 1903 wrote that he was "working subterraneously about the Submarines and there are many 'upheavals' in consequence".[194] It was owing to Fisher that, in January 1903, Captain R.H. Bacon[195] was made, "inspecting captain of submarine boats, with a free hand to experiment, develop, and organize the service".[196] On the basis of Bacon's reports in 1903, and the results of the fleet maneouvres in 1904 involving submarines, Whitehall began to change its mind about the value of the new boats.[197] Fisher stressed that the development of the submarine was inevitable and that experimentation with the new craft was necessary before an antidote could be developed. Many opposed him because they feared that by forcing the pace Germany would have to follow suit.[198] Richmond, for example, favoured the abolition of submarines which he felt were too costly and would prove useless in attacks on commerce.[199]

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[193] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 281.

[194] Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 172.

[195] R.H. Bacon, (afterwards Admiral Sir Reginald), 1863 to 1946. Director of Naval Ordnance and Torpedoes 1907 to 1909; Aide-de-Camp 1909.

[196] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 282.

[197] Ibid., V.I, 282.

[198] Ibid., V.II, 27.

[199] A.J. Marder, Portrait of an Admiral, p. 36.

In Fisher's eyes the submarine was not an instrument of a weaker power, as many in Britain liked to surmise, and he saw that Britain could not afford to ignore the submarine, especially since France was forging ahead in that field. French ports were too close to the English coast, and with ninety per cent of the ships in the Channel flying the British flag, the danger of the French submarine menace could not be ignored.[200] In 1903, France had fifteen submarines and was building or about to lay down another forty-three. This was compared with five and fourteen for Britain.[201] The Admiralty stood firm, and in spite of all opposition they were determined to push through a submarine programme. Unfortunately this programme was not ambitious enough, and Britain was very short of submarines in World War I.[202] Fisher felt that there was a shortage as early as 1904 and wrote about "our paucity of submarines. I consider it the most serious thing at present affecting the British Empire! ..."[203] However, Fisher did lay the foundation of the British

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[200]A.S. Hurd, "The Coming of The Submarine", Nineteenth Century, February 1902, p. 231.

[201]E. Robertson, "Naval Expenditure and Naval Strength", Nineteenth Century, April 1904, pp. 601-602.

[202]Lord Jellicoe, op. cit., p. 11. For further information see Appendix XI, p. 276.

[203]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, 309.

submarine fleet, and although Britain was short of submarines in World War I, she can thank Fisher that there were any available at all.

II. TORPEDOES.

The torpedo became more and more prominent in the late ninteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first 'fish torpedo' was that of Whitehead,[204] produced in 1868, the secrets of which were purchased by the British Government.[205] The difficulty with the early torpedoes was the method of discharge, which was done either by a catapult-type of mechanism or a crude dropping gear. Then too, once in the water the effectiveness of the torpedo suffered from its having a very limited range and being very difficult to direct. These difficulties were overcome to a certain extent with the invention of the torpedo tube and the gyroscope. Torpedo tubes appeared first in the Inflexible, in 1874, and soon became standard equipment on all ships.[206]

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[204]R. Whitehead, 1823 to 1905.
Experimented with torpedoes in the 1850's and years following. He acquired, and improved, Obry's invention, the gyroscope, which guaranteed precision of aim in a torpedo.

[205]F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 51.

[206]Ibid., V.II, 52.

Fisher showed a great interest in the torpedo and its development. He took this new weapon seriously and did much to promote the study of torpedo work while he was in charge of the torpedo school, H.M.S. Vernon, 1872 to 1876.[207] The torpedo led to the development of 'torpedo boats' over which France became very enthusiastic. To counter this, Fisher was largely responsible for a ship which came to be known as the 'destroyer', although the early ones were not too successful because they were structurally weak.[208] Both Clarke and Mahan felt that Britain should concentrate upon the building of destroyers, and Fisher, at first, was also enthusiastic, but he later concentrated so heavily upon the large type vessels that Britain, by 1914, suffered from a dearth of smaller ships.

The great value of the torpedo was to be seen when used in conjunction with the submarine but even Fisher did not foresee the effective use of submarines against commerce vessels. The torpedo became a more effective weapon follow-

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[207] R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 50-54. The H.M.S. Vernon was part of the establishment of H.M.S. Excellent. Fisher, on November 20, 1873, advocated a separation of the two schools. His proposals were accepted in February 1874, but no action was taken until January 1875.

[208] A.S. Hurd, "Naval Fashions", Nineteenth Century, November 1901, p. 757.

ing 1904 when its effective range was greatly increased,[209] and by 1906 information regarding torpedo advances was relegated to the secret list.[210] This increase in torpedo range greatly influenced Fisher's thoughts about the Dreadnought for he realized that much heavier guns would be necessary to allow a ship to remain out of torpedo range.

III. GUNNERY.

Gunnery had been sorely neglected in the Royal Navy, where much attention was paid to the appearance of the ships but very little to their fighting value.[211] Fisher, as early as 1883 to 1886 was very perturbed by this. While then in command of H.M.S. Excellent,[212] he stressed the value of breech-loading guns and machine guns, but there seemed to be a general

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[209] F.T. Jane, op. cit., V.II, 204.

[210] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.155, 1906, 129.

[211] Sir P. Scott, Fifty Years in the Royal Navy, p. 43.

[212] H.M.S. Excellent was the gunnery instruction school, established at Portsmouth in 1830. Also connected with it was the H.M.S. Calcutta, the two ships being joined by a bridge. This school however was ill-equipped, with the greater emphasis placed upon the theoretical as opposed to the practical training. Scott suggested the setting up of a new gunnery school on Whale Island, which was acquired by the Admiralty in 1856, and work on this project was finally started in the late 1880's, owing largely to the efforts of Fisher. Scott was sent to command the Excellent in 1890, and shortly afterwards all were transferred to Whale Island, where Scott remained until 1893.
See: Sir P. Scott, op. cit., p. 43 ff.

lethargy in the navy as far as gunnery was concerned, which Scott attributed to the absence of fleet competition and the lack of encouragement from the Admiralty.[213]

Fisher was very much aware that British gunnery was extremely ineffective, and that displayed at the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882 could hardly have impressed him.[214] While C.-in-C. in the Mediterranean Fisher emphasized the need for accurate long-range firing, especially after being told by Italian admirals that they were practicing up to seven thousand yards, which was much in excess of the British range.[215] Then too, the British ships were hampered by poor gun-sights, a defect which was not remedied until after Fisher became First Sea Lord, but one which was 'under consideration' by the Admiralty as early as 1902.[216]

In 1901 a committee was ordered by Sir Edward Seymour[217] to consider the drawing up of regulations for prize-

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[213]Sir P. Scott, op. cit., p. 73.

[214]See: Ibid., p. 62.

[215]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Selborne - October 1901), 208.

[216]P.D. - 4 Ser. - V. 108, 1902, 1386-1387.

[217]Sir Edward Seymour, 1840 to 1929.
C.-in-C. of the China Station 1897 to 1901; Commander at Devonport 1903 to 1905.

firing. This committee, presided over by Scott, consisted of Captain John Jellicoe, Captain Sir George Warrender,[218] two commanders, and ten gunnery lieutenants.[219] The proposals put forth were rejected by the Admiralty and were not adopted until 1905, under Fisher. Fisher saw that the first step towards improved gunnery was the acquisition of high-velocity guns, equipped with the best in range-finding devices.[220] Complaints were also being heard in the House of Commons over British guns being inferior to the high-velocity weapons of the French,[221] and it was felt too that many British ships were under-gunned.[222] Improvements began slowly to appear, such as the introduction of new high-velocity weapons, new powder, and an interchangeability in gun mountings as agreed to by three armament making firms.[223] It was also admitted that there were gun-sight defects and that some turret modi-

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[218] Sir George Warrender, 1840 to 1929.
Commander of the Second Battle Squadron in the Grand Fleet 1914 to 1915; C.-in-C. at Plymouth 1915 to 1917.

[219] Sir P. Scott, op. cit., p. 157.

[220] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Selborne - January 1902), 253.

[221] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.107, 1902, 147.

[222] Ibid., V.118, 1903, 437.

[223] Ibid., V.119, 1903, 875-876.

fications were required.[224] Thus, as modern equipment began to appear, the King, to encourage the best use of these new weapons, approved the awarding of gunnery medals.[225]

Certainly by 1903 the Admiralty appeared to be awakening to the prods that men such as Fisher and Scott had been giving it since the 1880's. After Fisher became First Sea Lord he appointed Scott, in 1905, Inspector of Target Practice and long-range battle practice,[226] and great strides were made in the field of gunnery. Fisher emphasized long-range accuracy which meant larger guns, and much more time was spent in battle practice. He said, when speaking at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in 1907, that, "the best ships, the biggest Navy ... is no use unless you can hit. You must hit first, you must hit hard, and you must keep on hitting."[227] Although fire accuracy improved enormously, there were still complaints that the British guns were inferior to those of the Germans, and were more susceptible to cracking. Fisher strenuously denied this,[228] although the early years of World War I tended

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[224] Ibid., V.119, 1903, 1175.

[225] Ibid., V.119, 1903, 1800.

[226] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 22.

[227] Lord Fisher, Records, p. 84.

[228] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to the Prince of Wales - April 1905), 60.

to substantiate this criticism.[229] Thus Fisher not only provided better ships, and bigger guns, but laid stress upon their being used properly. Under Fisher and Scott gunnery became an integral part of an officer's training and not merely an adjunct to it.

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[229] Jellicoe remarked that the following ships had to leave the Grand Fleet to have cracked guns replaced.

(i)	King Edward VII	- August 23, 1914	2-12-inch guns.
(ii)	Dominion	September 2	2 12-inch guns.
(iii)	Hibernia	September 11	1 12-inch gun.

See: Lord Jellicoe op. cit., pp. 108, 126.

CHAPTER V

YEARS OF ECONOMY 1906 TO 1907

The period 1906 to 1907 was one of Liberal economy, and also it saw a second international conference at The Hague convened for the purpose of seeking ways to reduce armaments. This period is discussed under the following headings:

I. The Navy Reductions and The Second Hague Peace Conference.

II. The Reorganization of Home Fleet.

III. The Fisher-Beresford Dispute.

IV. Fisher and The Army.

I. THE NAVY REDUCTIONS AND THE SECOND HAGUE PEACE CONFERENCE.

Besides the *Dreadnought* the Estimates for 1905 to 1906 called for three battle-cruisers, the *Inflexible*, *Indefatigable*, and *Invincible*.[1] These sacrificed a certain amount of armour for speed and, while somewhat inferior to the *Dreadnought*, they were wonderful steamers.[2] The cost of each ship was approximately £1,752,000 and, though built for a speed of twenty-five knots, they all, at one time or another, were able to do

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[1]For details of the *Invincible*, See: Chapter 4, page 121. The *Indefatigable* and *Inflexible* were ships of a similar type.

[2]F.T. Jane, *The British Battle Fleet*, V.II, 164.

twenty-eight.[3]

Meantime, while Fisher had been busy at the Admiralty, there were important happenings on the political scene. Lord Selborne resigned his position as First Lord on March 6, 1905,[4] and was succeeded by Lord Cawdor,[5] who held the post until December, 1905. While at the Admiralty, Cawdor was responsible for the Cawdor Memorandum, issued on December 4, 1905, which laid down the shipbuilding policy Britain was to follow in the future. It called for the construction of four large armoured ships per year.[6] No sooner had this been promulgated than the Balfour Government resigned, and Campbell-Bannerman came to power as the head of a Liberal administration in December, 1905. The elections, held in January, 1906, gave the Liberals a majority of eighty-four.

Many Germans expected a change of policy with the new Government, and indeed, the Liberals were quite prepared to come to an understanding with Germany, but not "at the expense

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[3]Ibid., V.II, 166.

[4]Lord Selborne was appointed High Commissioner for South Africa.

[5]Lord Cawdor.
See: footnote 83, Chapter 3.

[6]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 32. The Cawdor Memorandum followed by approximately three weeks the announcement of a German Supplemental Navy Law in November, 1905. This new German promulgation, which became the Navy Law of 1906, called for the construction of six cruisers and forty-eight destroyers, in addition to those called for in the Law of 1900.
See: E.L. Woodward, Great Britain and The German Navy, p.97.

of British relations with France".[7] This sentiment was expressed by Metternich[8] in a letter to Bülow[9] in the summer of 1905,[10] but many Germans laboured under the illusion that the Liberals were too much 'Little Englanders' to carry on with the same naval policy, and besides, the Liberals were known to favour a reduction in arms. This idea was not confined to the Germans alone, for Balfour was very much worried over the survival of the C.I.D.: he feared the Campbell-Bannerman Government planned to abolish it.[11] However, the C.I.D. did manage to survive although it was not used to the same extent as it had been under Balfour. Into the middle of all this came the Dreadnought, which was completed under the Liberals. This ship posed a problem for such vessels were expensive and, if anything, the Liberals sought to reduce arms expenditure so as to have money available for their programme of social reforms.

There was much speculation as to what was going to be

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[7]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 101.

[8]Count Metternich.
See: Footnote 29, Chapter 1.

[9]Von Bülow.
See: Footnote 12, Chapter 1.

[10]Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 196.

[11]B.F.C. Dugdale, A.J. Balfour, (London, 1936, 2 V.), V.I, 369.

the attitude of the new Government towards the navy. At first the Liberals were quite prepared to accept, with a few minor changes, the Estimates for 1906 to 1907 as prepared on the basis of the Cawdor Memorandum by the Balfour administration, and a statement to this effect was made in the House of Commons by Robertson.[12] As a matter of fact it was announced that the Government intended to lengthen the Portsmouth building slip as larger vessels than the Dreadnought were being contemplated.[13] However, a few months later there were reasons to believe that the Government had had a change of mind and it was rumoured in June that the Admiralty had decided upon, or was contemplating, the dropping of one or more armoured vessels from the 1906 to 1907 Estimates. The Liberals were bent on economy, and Campbell-Bannerman was faced with the difficult task of bringing relief to the taxpayer in the face of rising service Estimates.[14] It was also known that, if possible, the Liberals favoured an arms agreement, but Robertson made it clear that Britain was not going to lead the way as far as disarmament was concerned.[15] Still, by June of 1906

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[12] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.152, 1906, 1326.

[13] Ibid., V.152, 1906, 1327.

[14] J.A. Spender, The Life of Campbell-Bannerman, V.II, 208.

[15] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.152, 1906, 1340-1344.

no one was quite certain just what changes, if any, the Government was planning to make in the Navy Estimates. Robertson, however, refused to comment upon the rumour that the Government was planning changes in the Estimates.[16]

Behind the scenes changes were definitely being contemplated, but with Admiralty approval. Under the 1905 to 1906 programme there were laid down one dreadnought and three battle-cruisers, and, by the summer of 1906, it was seen that no other nation could be ready to lay down such ships for at least several months. Quite clearly Britain had a good lead in the new vessels, which made it very difficult to justify the laying down of four more armoured ships in the 1906 to 1907 programme. Fisher and his colleagues were willing to drop one large ship from this programme, and, if there was no unusual activity in foreign shipbuilding yards, they would agree to the dropping of another from the 1907 to 1908 Estimates.[17] In effect, the reduction in the 1906 to 1907 programme amounted to one dreadnought, three destroyers, and four submarines. The King was informed of these changes on July 10, 1906.[18] Much perturbed over the reductions, Edward VII

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[16] Ibid., V.158, 1906, 813.

[17] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 32.

[18] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 330.

remarked that, "evidently the cheese-paring policy of the Government is also to be extended to the navy."[19] Despite royal objection the Government insisted on the reductions. Besides the economy aspect they felt that any naval reduction which could be made would stand Britain in good stead at the next peace conference.

The reductions were announced in the House of Commons on July 27, 1906, and were loudly denounced by the Opposition and the Navy League who felt that the Sea Lords had become the tools of the 'Little Englanders'.[20] These thought that the 'two power standard' was threatened, but by this time the old power concept was all but defunct, and it was more and more being replaced by a 'one power standard' in which Britain was building solely against Germany.

Many criticized simply because the reductions were made by a Liberal Government, and others did so because irrespective of how large were the Estimates they could never be large enough to give Britain the size of fleet that she really needed. Fisher saw things differently, for he realized that a navy was an expensive proposition and that economies should be effected wherever possible as long as there was no reduction in the efficiency of the fleet. Certainly changes

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[19] Ibid., V.II, 330.

[20] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 32-33.

in the construction programmes were not new for, in the autumn of 1904, one proposed armoured cruiser and fourteen destroyers had been dropped, and again, in the autumn of 1905, one battle-cruiser of the Invincible type was dropped. In both cases these changes were made under the Balfour administration, and in neither case was anything said to Parliament. As a result, in the two financial years ending March 31, 1906, the Conservative Government:

> ... effected an economy of upwards of three and a half millions sterling and no reproach was hurled at it, and the Sea Lords were not held up to reprobation.[21]

Fisher realized, as many critics did not, that battleships could not, at a moments notice, be pulled from a hat. Even for a country such as Britain there was a limit to what her financial resources could stand. He felt that too many people confused large Estimates and efficiency, whereas, in effect, efficiency is more often to be found with smaller Estimates, as there then is no tendency towards extravagance. Lord Brassey[22] agreed with Fisher and claimed that Britain was powerful where power was needed -- near the centre of affairs,

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[21] A.S. Hurd, "The Government and The Navy", Nineteenth Century, November 1906, p. 731.

[22] Lord Brassey, 1836 to 1918.
Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1880 to 1884; Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty 1884 to 1885; founded Brassey's Naval Annual in 1886: also was its first editor.

and, since Britain built more cheaply and with greater rapidity than her rivals she could always overtake her rivals if the necessity arose.[23]

The Navy League was very vocal in their denunciation of the Government and Fisher, but, as Hurd[24] had pointed out, Britain still had a great superiority in old-type battleships, which were generally larger and more powerful than those of other countries, and they were concentrated in European waters.[25] Fisher was able to build dreadnoughts largely with the money he had saved by his other reforms, especially the scrapping of obsolete ships and the redistribution of the fleet. He fully realized that more and more the rising Estimates were

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[23] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.153, 1906, 221-222. The idea that Britain could build more rapidly than her rivals was an argument used by the opponents of the Dreadnought, but it was an argument which was rapidly becoming untenable because Germany was fast approaching Britain in rapidity of ship construction.

[24] A.S. Hurd (afterwards Sir Archibald), 1869 to
One of the more prominent writers on naval affairs. He served on the editorial staff of the Daily Telegraph 1899 to 1928.

[25] A.S. Hurd, "The Contest for Sea-Power", Nineteenth Century, August 1905, pp. 316-317.
Hurd shows the battleship strength as follows: Britain, 53; France, 17; Germany, 24. These are, however, pre-Dreadnought ships which, as Jellicoe pointed out, rapidly declined in value when the new armoured ships appeared on the scene.

becoming targets for the economists[26] -- and the economists were increasing in number! His maxim, therefore, was not to get as much as he could out of the Government, but to get as much as he thought absolutely necessary. Economy is not incompatible with efficiency, and Hurd even suggests that the reductions in the 1906 to 1907 programme were suggested to the Cabinet by Fisher.[27] This may be true to a point in that Fisher realized that it would be difficult to get public support for a large dreadnought programme, and furthermore, a healthy exchequer was needed should war arise. While probably he did not suggest the economies, Fisher was amenable to them.

The critics attacking the naval economy programme were on tenuous ground. In reply to the charge that the new Admiralty building policy endangered Britain's naval supremacy, Fisher said that Britain's building programme was a comparative one, depending entirely upon what other nations were building. This being so, he could see no justification for four armoured ships in the 1906 to 1907 Estimates. He pointed out that one dreadnought was built, three Invincibles were being built and three armoured ships were to be laid

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[26]R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 299.

[27]A.S. Hurd, "The Balance of Naval Power", Nineteenth Century, February 1905, pp. 228-229.

down in the 1906 to 1907 programme.[28] Also, while the Government had succeeded in inducing the Board of Admiralty to include only two more armoured ships in the 1907 to 1908 programme, so as to create a good impression for the forthcoming peace conference, Fisher had stipulated, and it was agreed upon, that should the conference fail, one more armoured ship would be added to the 1907 to 1908 Estimates.[29] Fisher was quite confident that such a conference would be a failure, so he really planned on getting three armoured ships for 1907 to 1908.[30] This meant that by 1908 Britain would have ten armoured ships built or building, while Germany as late as November, 1906, had no battleship in excess of 13,200 tons.[31] Indeed, "not a single German or French battleship of the new type has been begun".[32] Without really considering these facts, the critics launched their barrage against Fisher for throwing away British naval supremacy.

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[28] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - September 1906), 91.

[29] Ibid., V.II, 32.

[30] Ibid., V.II, 91.
On January 8, 1907, Fisher wrote that, "we have a pledge to lay down three more Dreadnoughts next year (as nothing will come of The Hague Conference) ..."
A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to White - January 1907), 113. In effect, the Conference failed but Fisher did not get the extra ship promised him.

[31] A.S. Hurd, "The Government and The Navy", Nineteenth Century, November 1906, p. 737.

[32] Ibid., p. 738.

Critics attacked what they called the reduction in naval efficiency. First there was the scrapping policy, then the fleet redistribution, and now a reduction in the building programme, and all this caused their alarm. In fact, however, the efficiency of the fleet, and the entire naval organization, had been much improved since Fisher went to the Admiralty. Fisher stressed that, "economy speeds efficiency because you get the utmost out of everything, and that makes everything better!"[33] Critics were too prone to count the number of ships, and to decide on that basis whether or not the fleet was efficient. Ships are necessary -- if there is to be a navy at all -- but "ships are not synonymous with naval power".[34] As far as Fisher was concerned naval successes were largely determined by the quality of the men. The question to be answered therefore, as Lee[35] correctly stated, was, "How many ships of complete efficiency according to modern requirements and manned by thoroughly trained crews, can be put into line of battle at a moments notice?"[36]

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[33] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 124.

[34] A.S. Hurd, "The Balance of Naval Power", Nineteenth Century, February 1905, p. 231.

[35] Arthur Lee (afterwards Viscount Fareham), 1868 to 1947.
Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1903 to 1905; First Lord of the Admiralty 1921 to 1922.

[36] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.152, 1906, 1341.

Critics tended to ignore this standard: they were too content to equate efficiency with great numbers of ships and high Estimates.

As a matter of fact, very few in England really realized the great work that had been done by Fisher and his Board of Admiralty. Grey[37] appreciated the achievement,[38] as did Esher, who remarked that the "present Board of Admiralty can justly claim that they are abreast of modern requirements, and at the same time have lightened the annual burden upon the taxpayer ..."[39] Irrespective of how short-sighted were the critics at home, just recognition of Fisher's efforts came from other countries. In France, Hanotaux said of Britain that, "by her recent measures she has set the seal upon her power and greatness",[40] and in Germany, a naval authority writing in January, 1906, said that the British fleet was no longer preparing for war, it was actually ready.[41]

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[37]Sir Edward Grey (afterwards Viscount), 1862 to 1933. Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1892 to 1895; Foreign Secretary 1905 to 1916.

[38]See: Viscount Grey, Twenty-Five Years, (New York, 2 V.), V.I, 118.

[39]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 148.

[40]P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.152, 1906, 1342.

[41]J.S. Corbett, "Recent Attacks On The Admiralty", Nineteenth Century, February 1907, p. 197.

Throughout 1906 there were troubles on the international scene as well. On January 16 the Algeciras Conference opened to solve the Morocco dispute between France and Germany. It resulted in a treaty being signed on April 7, about which Bülow said that, "although it did not give us all we wished, it did represent the essentials of what we had striven to attain".[42] This, however, was not the case for the Conference represented a diplomatic defeat for Germany. The German aim was to detach France from the Entente and in this endeavour she failed, and succeeded only in strengthening the Anglo-French bond. The Conference dealt with many difficult matters but it appeared "rather a detente from a previous period of tension than a crisis in itself".[43] It became increasingly more clear to Germany as a result of the conference that Britain had seen that 'splendid isolation' had to end, that she had ended it, and that he was determined to keep things that way.

There were serious consequences of the Algeciras Conference: before the summer of 1906 the German Navy League was in full agitation. Its members stressed that Germany in 1905 had been unable to intervene in Morocco because she lacked the necessary sea-power. Also, Anglo-German relations

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[42]Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 203.

[43]J.A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics, V.I, 201.

had not been improved by a speech of Lee's, on February 4, 1905, when he said:

> "If war should unhappily be declared, under existing conditions, the British Navy would get its blow in first, before the other side had even time to read in the papers that war had been declared ...."[44]

The agitation for a larger fleet which was building up in Germany in 1905 and early 1906 was certainly not alleviated by Fisher, who stirred up the fire and threw on more fuel. He kept harping upon the fact that Germany was the arch-enemy and that the day of reckoning was near at hand. With the launching of the Dreadnought in February, 1906, he took no pains to disguise its importance, and loudly proclaimed that sea warfare was now revolutionized and all other types of vessels would soon be obsolete.[45] Such utterings were not conducive to the easing of international tension, and better Anglo-German relations were facilitated neither by the German Navy Law of 1906[46] nor by Fisher's reorganization

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[44]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 95.

[45]J.A. Spender, Fifty Years of Europe, p. 265.

[46]The Navy Law of 1906. See: footnote 6.
Tirpitz said that he aimed at a rate of three ships per year, and that more money was needed for the transition to dreadnoughts "which we were compelled to build ... by the English".
Von Tirpitz, Memoirs, V.I, 265.

of the Home Fleet in October of the same year.[47]

Despite strained relations with Germany the Liberal Government had, by reductions in the 1906 to 1907 Estimates, indicated its willingness to discuss proposals for a reduction in armaments. Russia, too, was desirous of a conference on the subject, and Benckendorff[48] put forth such a suggestion to Grey, on April 3, 1906.[49] The Russians wanted this conference to be held in July, 1906, but it was agreed to postpone it for a year, and in 1906, as an act of good faith, Britain announced her reduction in the 1906 to 1907 building programme.[50] The chances for any agreement however were slight and when the King, in August, 1906, visited the Kaiser, the forthcoming conference was dampened by the Kaiser who remarked to Ponsonby[51] that:

> ... he had not the slightest intention of diminishing the armaments of Germany in any way

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[47]The Home Fleet reorganization is dealt with in section II of this chapter.

[48]Count Benckendorff, 1849 to 1917.
Russian Minister to Copenhagen 1897 to 1903; Minister to London 1903 to 1917.

[49]A.W. Ward, G.P. Gooch, The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, (New York, 1923,)V.III , 349.

[50]Ibid., V.III, 350. The reductions announced in July, 1906, were discussed earlier in this chapter.

[51]Sir Frederick Ponsonby (afterwards Lord Sysonby), 1867 to 1935.
Assistant Private Secretary to King Edward VII 1901 to 1910.

> or sort, and that he was quite convinced that if he did it would mean war with some European power.[52]

The Kaiser next re-affirmed this stand, as far as the navy was concerned, in a speech before the Reichstag, November 14, 1906, in which he emphasized Germany's right and duty to have a fleet commensurate with her commercial interests, and he denounced the Anglo-French Entente as simply a step in the attempt to encircle Germany.[53]

There were many Liberals, largely the traditional 'free trade' element, who really favoured a very drastic reduction in armament expenditure. They tended to feel that the major difficulty was the high British Estimates, and if these were substantially reduced then other nations would do the same.[54] This however, was a very naïve and fortunately not the predominant point of view, because, as Bismarck pointed out, "armed peace may be ruinous, but disarmament is a chimera ...."[55] Their thesis was the same sort of argument

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[52]Sir F. Ponsonby, Recollections of Three Reigns, (London, 1951), p. 183.
See also: S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 530.

[53]Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 254. The encirclement theory found an exponent in Baron Greindl, the Belgian Minister to Berlin.
See: S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 540.

[54]For example, see: Lord Avebury, "The Future of Europe", Nineteenth Century, March 1906, p. 423.

[55]J.E. Barker, "The Future of Anglo-German Relations", Nineteenth Century, April 1906, p. 528.

as that put forth by Cobden in the nineteenth century when he advocated the abolition of tariffs so as to set an example for the other nations.[56] Tariffs were abolished -- but only in Britain, and there was no reason to believe that it would have been otherwise as far as armaments were concerned. However the Liberal Government, in July, 1907, announced that one armoured ship would be dropped from the 1907 to 1908 Estimates, and one more if the peace conference was successful.

The Second Hague Peace Conference met from June 15 to October 17, 1907, but as far as armament reductions were concerned it accomplished nothing, which is all that could have really been expected since the various nations had decided against such reductions before the conference even started. Both the Kaiser and King Edward felt that such a gathering would be futile, and Balfour had long expressed his disapproval of Britain leading the way in naval reductions. He felt that, in this respect, the onus to begin such negotiations rested with the other nations who did not rely so heavily upon naval power.[57] Any reduction would certainly mean, as far as Britain was concerned, naval reductions and

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[56] Ibid., p. 529.

[57] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.146, 1905, 868.

she was not prepared to sacrifice her supremacy at sea. The British attitude was: "we alone must be the judges of what is necessary, and must never surrender this right into the hands of others".[58]

In short, the Hague Conference was more an attempt by the principal powers to, "manoeuvre one another into false positions than of promoting peace and disarmament".[59] Grey suggested that the different powers should communicate their naval programmes to one another before presenting them to their own Parliaments,[60] but this plan failed, in no small measure because of the Kaiser's suspicions of Fisher. There were good reasons for the Kaiser's fears, for Fisher was very indiscreet in his speeches, and such phrases as, "now is the time for us, let us hit them on the head",[61] or, his constant stress upon having the navy 'instantly ready for war' certainly had no pacifying effect on the somewhat unstable Kaiser. Indeed, even Esher was inclined to share the Kaiser's fears, and in a letter to Clarke, February 18, 1906, he remarked that, "there is no chance of the German Emperor being before-

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[58] Erroll, "Disarmament", Nineteenth Century, July 1906, p. 45. There were those in Britain who held this maxim for themselves, but denied it to Germany.

[59] W.D. Puleston, Mahan, p. 265.

[60] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 130.

[61] Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 187. See also: Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 136-137.

hand with us. There is far more risk of J.F. taking the initiatiye and precipitating war ..."[62] It is certainly clear that the Kaiser had no power to distinguish between British official and private opinion, for he should have realized that Fisher was subject to Cabinet control. The Kaiser's habit was to interpret things in such a way that they fitted in with his policies, and the actions of Fisher provided him with excellent propaganda for his navy programme.[63]

The Hague Conference thus failed, and the failure meant that in the future Fisher's maxim would prevail, SI VIS PACEM, PARA BELLUM (if you wish for peace, prepare for war). Careful stock-taking of the necessary defence needs would be required, and as much money must be spent as was considered necessary to provide for adequate protection. Not all realized this, however, and early in November, 1907, some one hundred and thirty-six Liberal Members of Parliament put a petition before Campbell-Bannerman calling for reduced Estimates. Grey and a few others were not so blind, for they realized that the time was not too far distant when increased

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[62]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 144.

[63]While the Hague Conference was in session, an Anglo-Russian Agreement was completed, on August 18, 1907. This was viewed by the Germans as another step in the British plan of encirclement.
See: E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 151.

naval expenditure would be a necessity.[64]

II. THE REORGANIZATION OF HOME FLEET.

The reorganization of the Home Fleet was not a new policy but rather it was a continuation of the fleet redistribution scheme of 1904. By 1906, and certainly after the passing of the new German Navy Law of 1906, Fisher was very much concerned with the increases in the German Fleet. What he proposed to do, therefore, was to create a North Sea Fleet by combining the Atlantic and Channel Fleets.[65] Fisher wanted not only to reorganize the existing fleets but also to create a new Home Fleet out of the reserve vessels which up until that time were still very poorly organized, each reserve division being under the rear-admiral of its respective home base. This new fleet was to be found by withdrawing six battleships and four armoured cruisers from the three active fleets and bringing them into immediate home waters. These ten ships, plus the reserve divisions were to form a, "homogeneous perfectly constituted Reserve Fleet always in 'Home Waters',

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[64]See: E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 130.

[65]S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 331.

working under the supreme command of one Admiral ..."[66] The placing of the Reserve Fleet under one admiral, Fisher felt, would greatly add to the fighting efficiency of the fleet. Fisher had been waiting for nearly two years to carry out this reorganization but a delay had been necessary, first of all to allow the opponents of the 1904 redistribution scheme to adjust to the changes. In 1906, however, with the increased fears about the increases in the German fleet, it appeared psychologically propitious to announce the reorganization of the Home Fleet.[67]

Fisher's new scheme was announced in an Admiralty Memorandum of October 23, 1906. The new Home Fleet was still divided into three divisions but they were made more efficient. The Nore Division of this new fleet, stationed at Sheerness, was to be fully manned and instantly ready for war. It was to consist of the six battleships taken from the active fleets, plus other vessels, and was to be constantly on duty in the

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[66] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - October 1906), 98.
In this letter Fisher mentions withdrawing seven battleships and four armoured cruisers, but in the Admiralty Memorandum of October 23, mention is made of only six battleships.
See: A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 33. The figures adopted by Lee agree with those cited by Marder.
See: S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 331-332.

[67] Ibid., V.II, 99.

North Sea.[68] The other two Home Fleet divisions, stationed at Portsmouth and Devonport, corresponded to the old Fleet Reserve, but these were now made more efficient by increasing their complements from two-fifths to three-fifths. This was done by the adoption of what Fisher called the 'sliding scale' of nucleus crews whereby the largest and most important vessels would have the largest nucleus crews.[69]

The Admiralty also announced a change in the distribution of the Channel and Atlantic Fleets. The old Atlantic Fleet which was based on Gibraltar used to be the pivot or reinforcing fleet for each of the Channel and the Mediterranean Fleets. Now, under the new system, the Atlantic Fleet was to be greatly strengthened and placed on duty in the Channel and the North Sea, and based on Portland and Rosyth. This formed a new Channel or North Sea Fleet. The old Channel Fleet became a new Atlantic Fleet, based on Berehaven, on the southwest coast of Ireland. This new Atlantic Fleet was still to act as the pivot force, and, with its new base, it was three days' steaming nearer to the English Channel.[70] Also, the

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[68] Ibid., V.II, 33.

[69] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to King Edward - October 1906), 104.

[70] A.S. Hurd, "The Government and The Navy", Nineteenth Century, November 1906, p. 741.
The old Atlantic Fleet, based on Gibraltar used to be the pivot force. It was possible however to move the new Atlantic Fleet (still a pivot force) closer to the English Channel because Britain, owing to her Entente with France, had less fear about the Mediterranean.

Mediterranean Fleet was now to be based on both Gibraltar and Malta. Therefore, the British vessels always at sea would now consist of the Channel Fleet with fourteen battleships, and the Mediterranean and Atlantic Fleets with six battleships apiece. Besides these ships there were fifteen armoured cruisers distributed among the three fleets.[71] The result of these changes was that the concentration of power in the North Sea was further increased, and the most powerful ships were placed in service in this area. For example, eight ships of the King Edward VII class, the most powerful afloat next to the dreadnoughts, were transferred from Gibraltar to the Portland base.[72]

Besides all these changes in the active fleets, there was still the new Home Fleet which was to be "held on the leash",[73] and the Nore Division of which was to cruise in the North Sea. This new Home Fleet was to consist of fifteen battleships and fourteen new armoured cruisers,[74] and would

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[71] Ibid., p. 741. The number of armoured cruisers was later reduced to twelve, each fleet having a squadron of four. See: A.S. Hurd, "The British Fleet and The Balance of Sea Power", Nineteenth Century, March 1907, p. 378.

[72] A.S. Hurd, "The Balance of Sea Power", Nineteenth Century, March 1907, p. 378.

[73] A.S. Hurd, "The Government and The Navy", Nineteenth Century, November 1906, p. 740.

[74] Ibid., pp. 741-742.

form, as Fisher said, "an Escarde d'Elite backed up by the remainder of the ships in reserve, as the Reserve or Second Division of the Home Fleet ..."[75] The new Home Fleet was to be under the supreme command of Vice-Admiral Bridgeman,[76] whose headquarters were to be at Sheerness. In time of war however the Home Fleet was to be under the C.-in-C. of the Channel Fleet.

When word of the proposed changes became known a great uproar came from the opposition. It was as if this latest reorganization was the final touch to all the dastardly changes that had taken place under the Fisher regime. Most of the criticism came from people such as Beresford, Lambton, Noel, and Custance, who were on the active list of the navy, and from retired officers such as FitzGerald, Bridge, and Richards.[77] These critics emphasized that not only had the active fleets been reduced but the new Home Fleet was

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[75] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to King Edward - October 1906), 104.
The Reserves referred to here are the other two divisions of ships in commission in reserve which were included in the Home Fleet. The older, more obsolete type of vessels, which would be used only in an emergency, contained only skeleton crews. They formed a Special Reserve of six old battleships.

[76] Sir Francis Bridgeman, 1848 to 1929.
C.-in-C. of the Home Fleet 1907 to 1909; Second Sea Lord 1910 to 1911; C.-in-C. of the Home Fleet 1911; First Sea Lord 1912.

[77] (i) Beresford - See: footnote 28, Chapter III.
(ii) Lambton - See: footnote 174, Chapter IV.

still split into three divisions and was not placed under the direct command of the C.-in-C. of the Channel Fleet, although it would be so in war. They also stressed that many vessels had only nucleus crews on board and that the fleet was lacking in war-training.[78] Clarke too was much opposed and could see in the new system nothing but a loss of efficiency. He said that,

> "... the general effect of the reorganization of 1907 was to divide the forces in home waters into two parts under separate Commanders-in-Chief -- the Channel Fleet and a squadron of six battleships based on the Nore".[79]

It was very difficult for Fisher to reply to such criticisms because his opponents did not know that this new

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[77](iii) Admiral Sir G. Noel, 1845 to 1918.
Commanded the Home Fleet and was Admiral -- Superintendent of the Naval Reserve 1900 to 1903; C.-in-C. of the China Station 1904 to 1906, of the Nore 1907 to 1908.

(iv) Admiral Sir R. Custance, 1847 to 1935.
Director of N.I.D. 1899 to 1902; Rear-Admiral in the Mediterranean Fleet 1902 to 1904; Second in Command of the Channel Fleet 1907 to 1908.

(v) Admiral C.C.P. FitzGerald, 1841 to 1921.
Second in Command China Station 1898 to 1899.

(vi) Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, 1839 to 1924.
D.N.I. 1899 to 1894; C.-in-C. of Australian Station 1895 to 1898, and of the China Station 1901 to 1904.

(vii) Sir Frederick Richards,
See: footnote 16, Chapter II.

[78]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 33.

[79]Lord Sydenham, My Working Life, p. 211.

scheme, as it was announced in 1907, was merely the embryo of a larger scheme. Fisher wanted to build up a concentration of dreadnoughts in home waters, but this had to be done without arousing German suspicion. It is true that the new Home Fleet was divided into three divisions yet would, in wartime, be under the C.-in-C. of the Channel Fleet. To have announced the peacetime merger of these two fleets in 1907 would certainly have aroused German concern, so Fisher had to move cautiously: the Channel and the Home Fleets were not merged until March, 1909.[80] This eventual merger provided the concentration the critics demanded. Fisher made provision for giving the Home Fleet as much sea-training as possible, and as for the complaint that many reserve ships had only nucleus crews, the critics seemed unable to remember that it was not many months previous when such ships had no crews at all! Neither were they able to remember that there were now twenty-six battleships in commission in British waters in 1907 -- over twice the number there in 1905.[81] Also, counting both battleships and armoured cruisers the number of ships in commission in British waters, under Fisher's new scheme, totalled sixty-four, as compared with nineteen in 1902, and twenty in

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[80] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 35.

[81] A.S. Hurd, "The Balance of Sea-Power", Nineteenth Century, March 1907, p. 380.

1903.[82] To these figures should also be added one hundred and ten torpedo-boat destroyers, fifty torpedo boats and thirty submarines, now also in home waters.[83]

It was without considering these facts that the critics, generally more willing and able to talk than to think, vented their distrust of Fisher and his latest reform, which they considered his final act of folly. They were too busy pointing out that the Nore Division of the Home Fleet was incapable of successfuly opposing the German High Seas Fleet, without for a moment considering that perhaps this was not intended. Fisher knew that the Nore Division was not capable of successful opposition until he had built it up to strength, and equipped it with dreadnoughts, which was done by 1909. He saw that caution was necessary and the building up of the new fleet,

> ... had to be done unostentatiously and by slow degrees, for fear of exciting the attention of the German Admiralty and too much embroiling myself with the Admirals whose fleets had to be denuded .... [84]

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[82] Ibid., p. 384. The fighting ship figures were as follows:

The total number of battleships in the Channel, Atlantic, and Home Fleets was thirty-eight, and of armoured cruisers twenty-six, making a grand total of sixty-four.

[83] A.S. Hurd, "The Government and the Navy", Nineteenth Century, November 1906, p. 742.

[84] Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 240.

Clarke emphasized that Germany had sixteen battleships permanently in commission in the North Sea, with four more in perfect readiness in reserve, and that this fleet was numerically stronger than the British Channel Fleet.[85] This was quite true, the Channel Fleet had two battleships less, but one more armoured cruiser, making a total of four. Moreover, Clarke ignored the fact that the British ships were larger, heavier gunned, and that in case of hostilities the Channel Fleet could call upon the Nore Division of the Home Fleet, the Atlantic Fleet, and the other two divisions of the Home Fleet at Portsmouth and Devonport.[86]

Fisher claimed that without increasing the Estimates he had made the fleet more efficient and much stronger in home waters, yet his critics claimed that the efficiency of the navy had been reduced by twenty-five per cent. It is true that he reduced the number of battleships in the old Atlantic and the Mediterranean Fleets, but it was possible to do this by 1907 because for Britain the major naval threat lay in Germany, not in France, and thus the main sphere of interest shifted from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. Owing to the Entente with Britain, France was able to transfer eight of her latest

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[85]Lord Sydenham, op. cit., p. 210.

[86]A.S. Hurd, "The Balance of Sea-Power", Nineteenth Century, March 1907, p. 389.

battleships from the area of the English Channel and the North Sea to the Mediterranean, thus allowing Fisher to reduce the British force in that area.[87] Both the Prince of Wales and Hardinge showed concern over Fisher's policies but then, like most of the other critics, neither really understood what was taking place. Once again, while the critics at home were blind to the value of Fisher's policy, the Germans saw things in a much clearer light and on November 1, 1906, the Hamburger Nachrichten carried the following article on the new British fleet reorganization.

> "The object is very plain. It shows an extraordinally carefully planned economy ... since a ship in Reserve does not cost so much as one in the Active Fleet. We must, however, warn our readers against the deception which a number of the English Conservative papers bona and mala fide give out, that the new organization means a reduction of the English fighting force. Just the opposite is the case".[88]

The King, however, stood solidly behind Fisher, and there is some doubt that without this support, owing to the violent opposition stirred up, Fisher would have been able to

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[87] A.S. Hurd, "The Government and The Navy", Nineteenth Century, November 1906, p. 740.
It was later discovered, however, that the French Navy was in a more archaic state than it was thought to be in 1907. In fact, by 1912 Britain had started building up her naval strength in the Mediterranean because she did not feel the French fleet alone capable of providing adequate protection in that area.

[88] J.S. Corbett, "Recent Attacks On The Admiralty", Nineteenth Century, February 1907, p. 198.

carry through his scheme.[89] However, on January 1, 1907, his reorganization plans were accepted by the Cabinet, and the fleet reorganization was scheduled to take place the following March.[90]

III. THE FISHER-BERESFORD DISPUTE.

Fisher had pushed through his reform schemes but he had created many bitter enemies in so doing, and his critics, both without and within the navy, by 1907, were both too numerous and too vocal to be easily silenced. He aroused the ire of the retired officers by committing a cardinal sin in completely flouting naval tradition. But this was not all. Besides the retired officers many officers on the active list were also gravely concerned over Fisher's actions. Many were critical of his methods, but others, such as Beresford and his supporters, were also jealous of his power. Even by 1906 there were strong rumours of unrest in the navy, and both the King and the Prince of Wales "were very much disturbed at the Service agitation headed by Lord Charles Beresford and Admiral Lambton".[91]

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[89] S. Lee, Edward VII, 598.

[90] Ibid., V.II, 333.

[91] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter from Bacon - April 1906), 77.

Certainly a quarrel was generating within the service, and Fisher was not unaware of the fact.[92] Some of the complaints against Fisher were perhaps justifiable, but certainly not all. There is no doubt that while he was First Sea Lord he was the Board of Admiralty, and the policies followed were his policies. Yet, during his stay at the Admiralty he gave the navy what it really needed -- an autocrat. To remove all the lethargy the naval edifice had to be thoroughly shaken -- he shook it, and sweeping reforms in a short period of time were possible only by stepping upon many toes -- so he did; in fact he jumped! Neither were his reforms ill-thought out as many claimed: rather, Fisher's error lay in his failure to be diplomatic about them. He made no effort to appeal to the patriotic sentiment of the officers, but prided himself on never explaining his reforms, saying, when questioned about them, "it is only damn fools who argue".[93] Some accused him of promoting only his favourites but this is true only if 'favouritism' be interpreted as 'merit'. Fisher said that, "favouritism is the secret of efficiency"[94] and he sought to find the best man for the position, and would not take a chance on having some fool

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[92]See: Ibid., V.II, 76-77.

[93]Ibid., V.II, 37.

[94]Ibid., V.II, 38.

put into a position simply because he was the senior man. Neither was he guilty of espionage within the fleet, but the critics were on fairly solid ground in criticizing Fisher's use of the press, which was a complete violation of all naval tradition: they became especially hostile when Bacon's letters began circulating in the autumn of 1907, and became public in 1909.[95]

Bacon, one of Fisher's most loyal supporters, had informed Fisher that many of the senior officers were annoyed at not being consulted about any of the changes that had taken place, and as a result, "the Navy was suffering from want of loyalty to the Admiralty among the Admirals afloat".[96] Fisher felt however that, in view of the changes necessary, and naval officers being as conservative as they are, action, not talk was required, and he said that, "the manner in which the recent changes had been received, root and branch and sweeping as they were, shows, as nothing else can, the necessity for reforms ..."[97]

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[95] Ibid., V.II, 38. While serving in the Mediterranean in 1906 Bacon sent confidential letters about his superiors to Fisher. Fisher had these printed in order to use them against his critics.

[96] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter from Bacon - April 1906), 72-73.

[97] Lord Fisher, Records, p. 151.

Of the critics outside the navy, Clarke was perhaps the most vehement, being particularly aroused by Fisher's dreadnought policy. In Fisher's eyes Clarke was attempting to transfer Admiralty responsibility to the C.I.D., and he wrote to Tweedmouth that under no conditions would the Admiralty tolerate any abdication of their function.[98] On this point Esher concurred with Fisher, for he felt that so far as dreadnoughts were concerned "it is no affair of Clarke's. That question must be left to the Admiralty".[99]

The dispute with Clarke was one of the things which caused Fisher to be distrustful of the C.I.D., which was unfortunate because Fisher could have used the backing of that body in his dispute with Beresford. Fisher, however, was first and foremost an autocrat, and a 'discussion group' such as the C.I.D. was rather distasteful to him. For this attitude he was taken to task, and rightly so, by Esher, who reminded him that he had things too much his own way, and that there would be much trouble in the future unless he changed his methods of dealing with opponents.[100] Esher told Fisher that

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[98] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - July 1906), 83.

[99] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter M.V.B. - September 1906), 179.

[100] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Fisher - September 1906), 181-182.

he was his own worst enemy and suggested that he would be wise to use the C.I.D. for his own ends, not ignore it, because, "in a country like ours, governed by discussion, a great man is never hanged. He hangs himself".[101] This was sage advice, the truthfulness of which was revealed in 1909, but advice which, unfortunately, Fisher was not prone to heed.

By the spring of 1907 it was becoming increasingly more clear to Fisher that the real attack upon the Admiralty was going to be led by Beresford, who headed the 'Syndicate of Discontents! Actually Beresford's attitude was not new for in 1894 he had criticized Admiralty policy and then Fisher had written that, "he is really very stupid, but he can't resist self-advertisement".[102] Again in 1901, Fisher had occasion to refer to Beresford's incorrigibility.[103] By 1907 signs appeared that Beresford was preparing what amounted to a full-scale revolt against Fisher.

The first struggle was over the appointment of Beresford as C.-in-C. of the Channel Fleet. Beresford wanted the position but only on the condition that more cruisers and

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101 Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Fisher - October 1906), 199.

102 A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.I, (Letter to Spencer - September 1894), 122.

103 Ibid., V.I, (Letter to Lady Fisher - September 1901), 355.

destroyers be added, and that the new Home Fleet also be put under his command.[104] Fisher, however, announced that he had no intention of being dictated to by any outside party.[105] He feared that there might be a Parliamentary inquiry into the naval dispute, and Beresford was desirous of this, but on January 27, 1907, Fisher wrote to Tweedmouth of the "intended resignation of the Sea Lords if there is any truckling to either Beresford or Parliamentary pressure to have an inquiry into Admiralty policy ..."[106] While on January 28 an agreement was reached between Fisher and Beresford, Fisher still feared an inquiry, although he was reassured somewhat upon being informed that both Balfour and Lee were opposed to any such action.[107]

In spite of this the storm was just beginning and Fisher who knew it, was fearful. He felt, as Esher said, as though he were "standing on the edge of a precipice to which all great reformers are led, and over which they ultimately fall".[108] Esher told him once again that any attack upon

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[104] Ibid., V.II, 116.

[105] Ibid., V.II, 117.

[106] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - January 1907), 117.

[107] Ibid., V.II, 118.

[108] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 215.

Beresford should be through the C.I.D., so that instead of Fisher versus Beresford it would be "Fisher plus Defence Committee plus Cabinet versus Beresford".[109] Instead of this, however, Fisher allowed the opposing forces to consolidate against him, and he allowed Beresford to accept the position of C.-in-C. of the Channel Fleet, knowing full well that the latter was opposed to his policies. Certainly the economies shown in the Estimates for 1907 to 1908 gave 'Beresford and Company' another opportunity to arraign Fisher and the Admiralty on the grounds that the entire naval programme was below the needs of the nation.[110]

Beresford assumed command of the Channel Fleet on April 15, 1907, and he agreed with Fisher that all their disputes should be discussed verbally, in an effort to put an end to the rift within the ranks of the service.[111] However, this agreement collapsed over the question of war plans. Beresford's predecessor, Sir Arthur Wilson,[112] had drawn up a set of war plans but Fisher decided that as conditions had changed,

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[109] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Fisher - February 1907), 219-220.

[110] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 598.

[111] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 121.

[112] Sir Arthur Wilson, 1842 to 1921.
Third Sea Lord 1897; C.-in-C. of the Channel Fleet 1903 to 1907; First Sea Lord 1909 to 1912.

and as there was a new fleet organization, Wilson's plans would not suffice.[113] Beresford kept complaining that he had received no war plans whatever, despite the fact that it was Admiralty policy to issue war orders, not war plans. The commander was informed of the general Admiralty policy to be followed should war break out and left to draw up his own plans. This, however, did not appeal to Beresford. He also began to complain that the fleet was by no means ready for war, and he labelled the new Home Fleet as a "fraud upon the public and a danger to the Empire".[114] Beresford was determined to buck Fisher at every turn, and he felt that over the question of war plans Fisher could be seriously challenged. The result was that Beresford's conduct degenerated into gross insubordination and by the middle of May, 1907, his aim seemed to be to show that "neither the Admiralty nor Sir A. Wilson ever had any War Plans".[115]

Fisher was furious with Beresford, Custance, and the entire Beresford clique, but it was very difficult for him to move because, if possible, he wanted to keep the differences of opinion within the confines of the navy itself. At this

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[113] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Beresford - April 1907), 122.

[114] Ibid., V.II, 177.

[115] Ibid., V.II, 178.

time, too, many people were criticizing the reorganization of the fleet, and while this was only the beginning of a larger scheme, Fisher, for security reasons, could not reveal his ultimate aim, which was, as we have seen, to increase greatly the concentration of British power in the North Sea. Hence, it was difficult for him to counter effectively the arguments of his opponents. He was also hampered by the fact that, having ignored Esher's advice regarding the C.I.D., he stood practically alone in the face of a very determined group of opponents. He thought of registering a formal complaint against Beresford and his supporters before the rift became a definite split, but Tweedmouth thought this action a little hasty.[116] The result was the only thing that could have been expected; Beresford continued his agitation for war plans and more ships, and it became increasingly more evident that a veritable split in the naval ranks was developing.

Beresford received war orders in July, 1907, these being annulled a year later by a new set of orders, but he claimed that both were useless.[117] He was asked by the Admiralty in June, 1907, to submit war plans for the approval of the Board, but this he did not do.[118] Next, after it was

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[116] *Ibid.*, V.II, (Letter from Tweedmouth - June 1907), 125.

[117] *Ibid.*, V.II, 40.

[118] *Ibid.*, V.II, 178-179.

agreed that the Channel Fleet would be strengthened, he asked for still more cruisers, whereupon Fisher remarked that, "the very day after getting all he asks for, he asks for three more".[119] By this time Beresford thought that the Admiralty was becoming completely submissive, and that he would, in future, have everything his own way.

Beresford's reading of the situation, however, was very much in error. It is true that Fisher left much to be desired as far as war plans were concerned, and that in the event of hostilities he probably planned personally to direct everything from the Admiralty. But Fisher's real fault was his failure to realize that his eventual successor might be a much less competent man than himself and be unable to bear the responsibilities Fisher was giving to his office. Beresford, therefore, had a reasonable basis for complaint, but it was becoming more and more obvious that he was complaining, not to set forth legitimate grievances, but to put Fisher in a bad light. Beresford was probably incapable of drawing up suitable war plans himself, not being a tactician or strategist of note,[120] but he undoubtedly fancied himself as being an excellent First Sea Lord. Fisher, however, had other ideas,

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[119] *Ibid.*, V.II, 127.

[120] *Ibid.*, V.II, 39.

which did not include bending before Beresford.

This dispute continued until, by November, 1907, the rift had definitely become a split, and the spirit of brotherhood in the navy was broken. The feud could no longer be kept from the public, especially after Beresford and Scott had a falling out. Fisher was certainly standing on the edge of a precipice but did not fall because his friends, especially the King, would not let him fall.[121] Fisher, when he repudiated Beresford's accusations about the navy in a very flippant speech at the Guildhall Banquet, November 9, 1907, was taken to task,[122] but he did manage to shelve temporarily Beresford's demands for a Parliamentary inquiry into Admiralty policy. He was not prepared to tolerate this, and said to Cawdor that such an inquiry would so

> "... utterly shake the confidence of the Navy in the Sea Lords that we should have no option but to resign, and that, in confidence I tell you, we have decided upon, and the Prime Minister and Lord Tweedmouth are aware of it".[123]

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[121] Ibid., V.II, 40-41. Scott, who commanded the First Cruiser Squadron in the Channel Fleet, was much annoyed at having his gunnery programme interferred with by an order from Beresford, cancelling all exercises, so as to paint the ships in preparation for the visit to England of the German Kaiser. Scott cancelled the entire gunnery programme and had words with Beresford. Beresford, was furious when he was not supported by the Admiralty in this dispute; hence, he accused Scott of being 'in the Fishpond'.

[122] Ibid., V.II, 150.

[123] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Cawdor - November 1907), 151.

There was, as a result, no inquiry in 1907, but the faith of the navy in the Sea Lords had been shaken. Its ranks were split into the Fisherites, Beresfordites, and the Neutrals. The rancour within the navy certainly was preparing the way for the inquiry which was to come in 1909, under Asquith. Fisher was cursed for his autocratic methods, but those who cursed failed to see that only an autocrat could modernize the British Navy. To replace the present Board of Admiralty, the purpose of the desired inquiry, until the reforms were completed, was madness. Since this was what Beresford and Custance wanted, they were even more insane than they wished to make Fisher appear.

Meanwhile, Fisher was opposed by the 'conscriptionists' who advocated a large army. There were several invasion scares in England which did not encourage reduction in the Estimates, scares which provided the 'consctiptionists' with their principal ammunition. To deal with the struggle between Fisher and this group it is necessary to discuss Fisher's views on the army, the final topic of this chapter.

IV. FISHER AND THE ARMY.

The Boer war had revealed the weakness of the British military machine. Certainly the Esher Commission did much to remedy the ills, and after 1904 official opinion was behind the 'blue water school' of defense which gave the army only a

subordinate role. With the coming to power of a Liberal administration in 1905, Haldane was appointed to the War Office where he set to work reforming the army on the basis that the army was a 'projectile to be fired by the navy'. This was strictly according to 'blue water' principles, and, from 1906 to 1909 the Army Estimates were reduced by £2,000,000, which formed "the Army's contribution to the needs of the navy".[124] Fisher was completely in accord with the views of Haldane, but not everyone in Britain supported the army proposals of the Esher Commission, or the 'blue water' principles. The opponents of army reductions stirred up numerous 'invasion scares' between 1905 and 1909.

Balfour strongly supported the Fisher viewpoint and said in Glasgow, January 18, 1905, that:

> "... the success of our diplomacy, our power of at once holding our just rights, and yet avoiding war, depend in the last resort on the relative strength of our Navy ..."[125]

Esher stressed that the British Army was not for the defence of the British Isles, per se,[126] and Mahan too was convinced that "sea power was based upon a powerful navy and a small

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[124] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 502.

[125] B.F.C. Dugdale, Balfour, V. , 437.

[126] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter to Fisher - February 1905), 75.

standing army".[127] On May 11, 1905, Balfour reviewed the question of imperial strategy in the House of Commons and he definitely discounted any possibilities of invasion.[128] This view was based upon the findings of the C.I.D. which had investigated the invasion question.

There were many however who emphasized that for defense purposes a large army, as well as a large navy, was necessary. Lord Roberts thought along these lines as did Admiral Fitz-Gerald, who stressed that "a great Empire cannot be defended without an army, ..."[129] What these people failed to realize is that Britain had to choose between being a naval power or a military power, for she could not be both, and it would have been rather silly had she chosen to be the latter. By the time the Balfour Government resigned in December, 1905, Britain had decided to remain a naval power but no one was certain how the navy was to be used, and neither was their any scheme for army and navy co-ordination in time of war.

Fisher tended to ignore the role of the army, and, as has been indicated, as far as the navy was concerned Fisher was

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[127] W.D. Puleston, Mahan, p. 134.

[128] C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

[129] Admiral FitzGerald, "Have We An Army", Nineteenth Century, September 1905, p. 462.
See also: J.L. Barker, "The Future of Anglo-German Relations", Nineteenth Century, March 1906, p. 537.

very reticent about war plans.[130] This reticence was certainly not conducive to co-ordinating the functions of the army and the navy. Fisher, however, felt that co-ordination must wait until the role of the army had been decided upon, and no decision on this role had been made by March, 1906,[131] or even, Fisher claimed, by 1909.[132]

Fisher too heavily emphasized that England was an 'Island State' and felt that she should be a naval power pure and simple. Esher agreed that Britain was an 'Island State' but he felt that such a state still needed a small army. Since this was so, Esher backed Haldane's new scheme for an efficient voluntary army, although he felt that the volunteers would not be forthcoming and in the end there would have to be conscription.[133] Fisher, therefore, had to consider an army in his defence schemes.

The First Sea Lord felt that the Admiralty alone was concerned with countering any possible invasion of Great Britain. He resented the C.I.D.'s claim to be consulted despite the warning of Esher that "the Defence Committee is a new factor in our Administrative system, having its origin in the

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[130]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter to M.V.B. - January 1906), 135.

[131]P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.154, 1906, 638.

[132]Lord Fisher, Memories, pp. 188-189.

[133]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 186,190.

proved weakness from 1899 to 1901 of the older system, now superseded."[134] Nor would he really admit that the army had a part to play in the defence of the country.

Invasion, Fisher said, is only possible "if there was no British Fleet in the North Sea -- which was impossible".[135] To him, the obvious remedy if the navy was not considered strong enough was not an army but the increase of the size of the fleet. The army should consist of mobile troops, and its role, as he saw it, lay in great combined naval and military expeditions,[136] which were for offensive and not defensive operations. This however required a co-ordination of the two services and Fisher was not willing to do this. He was willing to co-operate, but not to co-ordinate, because he felt that the latter would give some people outside the Admiralty, such as those on the C.I.D., a voice in naval policy. This, for Fisher, ran against the grain and against the duties of the First Sea Lord, as he interpreted them.

Fisher was basically correct in his invasion views and little stock could be put in an article written by a

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[134] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Fisher - August 1907), 248.

[135] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Clarke - September 1907), 132.

[136] Lord Fisher, Memories, 34.

member of the German General Staff, saying that Germany could land six divisions in England in approximately thirty hours.[137] Just what the British fleet was to be doing during this period was not specified, although, as Admiral Wilson said, it would in all probability have been wrecking havoc with the German transports.[138] Hence, Fisher could never understand the 'invasion scares' or the cry for a larger army, although Esher was quick to remind him that:

> ... it is these discussions which keep alive popular fears and popular interest, upon which alone rests the Navy Estimates.
> An invasion scare is the mill of God which grinds you out a Navy of Dreadnoughts ....[139]

Fisher became quite hostile towards the C.I.D. over an 'invasion inquiry' which was conducted by a C.I.D. Sub-Committee, presided over by Asquith.[140] Its hearings began on November 27, 1907, and Fisher was under the illusion that Beresford was going to be called to give evidence against the

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137J.E. Barker, "The Anti-British Policy of Germany", Nineteenth Century, September 1907, p. 357.

138Lord Sydenham, op. cit., p. 183.

139Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter to Fisher - October 1907), 249.

140H.H. Asquith (afterwards Earl), 1852 to 1928. Home Secretary 1892 to 1895; Chancellor of the Exchequer 1905 to 1908; Prime Minister 1908 to 1916 (of a National Coalition Government, May 1915 to December 1916).

Admiralty,[141] for he knew Beresford to be very anxious to perform this task. Although Fisher's wrath was aroused by this new inquiry, Esher still told him to tread very carefully, for the only alternative to the inquiry was a Royal Commission to inquire into the navy!

The invasion investigation committee was faced with Fisher's claims that the navy was instantly ready for war, Beresford's claim that the navy was not, and the demand of Lord Roberts and the militarists for an army of continental proportions. Beresford held forth in "every drawing-room in London",[142] doing all he could to disparage Fisher and his reforms. Despite Beresford, Balfour came out in favour of Fisher,[143] and Beresford and the militarists were defeated by their failure to explain how an invasion could take place without its being intercepted by the British fleet.[144] The report of the Sub-Committee was accepted by the C.I.D. on October 22, 1908, and that report stated that, "invasion was impossible provided naval supremacy was assured, though naturally complete defeat must result if supremacy was lost ...."[145]

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[141] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Corbett - December 1907), 152.

[142] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Cawdor - January 1908), 159.

[143] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 280.

[144] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Ottley - January 1908), 160.

[145] C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

Jellicoe generally agreed with this although he thought a landing on the east coast possible, but highly improbable, as the weather conditions there were nearly always poor.[146]

The years 1908 to 1909 thus were to be difficult ones for Fisher for he had stirred up so much animosity in the carrying out of his reforms that his remaining in power was now due solely to the avid support of a very few, albeit influential friends, including King Edward. But, when one has created such a storm both within and without the navy as had Fisher, then one's days in power are numbered for the swell of the opposition waves can be stemmed for just so long.

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[146]Lord Jellicoe, The Grand Fleet. 23.

CHAPTER VI

FALL FROM POWER: 1908 to 1909

The years 1908 to 1909 saw not only the weakening of the ties between Britain and Germany, but also the forced retirement of Fisher as First Sea Lord. This chapter is divided as follows:

I. The Deterioration of Anglo-German Relations.

II. The Estimate Crisis.

III. The Beresford Dispute and The Admiralty Inquiry.

I. THE DETERIORATION OF ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS.

Fisher had been having his difficulties with the programme of economy, but the deterioration of relations with Germany after 1907 gave more ammunition to his critics. There was much uneasiness in England over a new German Navy Law which passed the Reichstag in January, 1908.[1] This new Law called for the building of four armoured ships a year from 1908 to 1911 inclusive, two armoured ships a year from 1912 to 1917, and three such ships a year, permanently, after 1917.[2] Provision was also made for shortening the lives of battleships from twenty-five to twenty years, and this was to

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[1]E.L. Woodward, Great Britain and the German Navy, p.155.

[2]Von Tirpitz, My Memoirs, V.I, 267. Tirpitz thought, in 1908, that the three-ship rate might have been started as early as 1915 or 1916.

be made possible by "accelerating the building of new ones to replace them ".[3] The text of this new Law was known in England by November, 1907 but, in spite of everything, the Government, by December, had decided not to increase the Estimates.[4]

The new German Law caused a 'scare' in England and Grey realized that economies could not be practiced for very much longer.[5] By February, 1908, the Cabinet was in the throes of an Estimate crisis, and the Prime Minister was faced with the threatened resignation of five ministers unless, as they demanded, the Estimates were reduced by £1,340,000.[6] The Cabinet considered making this reduction but Fisher was much opposed. He said that the Estimates had already been reduced by £750,000 and that represented the absolute maximum. Besides the proposed new reductions would upset the Estimates for 1908 to 1909, already drawn up and approved.[7] Lloyd George[8] insisted that there must be a reduc-

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[3]Ibid., V.I, 266.

[4]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 268.

[5]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 155.

[6]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 281. In November, 1907, as noted previously, Campbell-Bannerman had been presented with a petition by Liberal Members of Parliament demanding Estimate reductions.

[7]Ibid., V.II, 281.

[8]David Lloyd George (afterwards Earl of Dwyfor), 1863 to 1945.

tion and claimed that Beresford was willing to become First Sea Lord and reduce the Navy Estimates by £2,000,000! Fisher, however, stated that if the Government wanted Beresford at the Admiralty they could appoint him, but as long as he was First Sea Lord he would agree to the suggested new reductions only if supplementary Estimates would be granted should the Admiralty deem them necessary.[9] In the end Fisher decided to leave the decision of accepting or rejecting the proposed reductions to the Board of Admiralty, and he would abide by their decision. The Board flatly rejected the suggested reductions, and the Cabinet agreed that the Navy Estimates would stand, although they wanted Haldane to make an army cut of £300,000.[10]

The 1908 to 1909 Estimates called for the building of two armoured ships, as opposed to the German programme which, having been increased by one, brought their total to four.[11]

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[8]President of the Board of Trade 1905 to 1908; Chancellor of the Exchequer 1908 to 1915; Minister of Munitions 1915 to 1916; Secretary for War 1916; Prime Minister 1916 to 1922.

[9]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 282.

[10]Ibid., V.II, 283-284.

[11]F.T. Jane, The British Battle Fleet, V.II, 174.
The 1908 to 1909 Estimates are also significant because they made provision for the building of five small cruisers, the need of which was again being recognized. See: F.T. Jane op. cit., V.II, 206.
E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 157, gives the number of small cruisers as six. See also: the article on the 1908 to 1909 Estimates by W.H. White, "The Naval Estimates and Naval Debates", Nineteenth Century, April 1908, 517-533.

This was quite sufficient to start a naval agitation in Britain, and Fisher saw, as did others, that in future the Estimates must be increased if Britain was to maintain a good margin of naval supremacy over Germany.

That future reductions would not be possible was hinted at in a Cabinet announcement which stressed that the 1908 to 1909 Estimates were to suffice for that one year only,[12] but it was difficult for the Government to make a definite commitment owing to the dissension within the Liberal Party over the question of Service Estimates. Still there was no doubt in the British mind that the new German Naval Law was a serious challenge to British naval supremacy, and that day was past when Britain could hope to rely upon her ability to build more quickly than the Germans.[13] Also considered was the fact that after the failure of the Second Hague Conference little hope could be held out for any arms reduction agreement, and Fisher, upon hearing rumours that Tirpitz was in favour of limiting the size of the guns in ships, said, "I'll see him d -- d first".[14]

The Germans were certainly aware of the British view

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[12] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 157.

[13] Ibid., p. 160.

[14] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Esher - February 1908), 164.

of their new Law, and Metternich, in a dispatch of March 8, 1908, wrote that:

> "... whether the threat is deliberate or potential, both sections of opinion, and all England, agree that it exists. The consciousness of this danger naturally increases with the expansion of our fleet. We are the only Power whose fleet is a source of anxiety to England ...."[15]

Unfortunately Metternich's reports carried no weight with the Kaiser, who was dominated by Tirpitz, and Tirpitz really did not care what the British thought of German naval policy. He said that, "we had never hoped for British approval during the creation of our sea-power".[16]

The effect of the German Navy Law was not long in manifesting itself in England, and it gave Fisher's critics another opportunity to insist that the Estimates had been too low and, with the resulting economies, the efficiency of the navy had greatly deteriorated. The most pertinent question to be discussed, however, was that concerning the Estimates for 1909 to 1910. That there would have to be an increase had already been indicated but to what extent had yet to be decided upon. At this juncture Campbell-Bannerman resigned, April 1908, for health reasons and was succeeded by Asquith. Tweedmouth be-

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[15] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 169.

[16] Von Tirpitz, Memoirs, V.I, 268.

came Lord President of the Council,[17] and was succeeded at the Admiralty by Reginald McKenna.[18] Fisher, at first, was apprehensive about the appointment of McKenna, who had been one of the five ministers who threatened resignation over the 1908 to 1909 Estimates.[19] The King, on April 14, 1908, approved McKenna's appointment on the condition that, in case it was being contemplated, Fisher was not to be removed from the Admiralty.[20] It was not long however before Fisher thought very highly of McKenna, who did a great deal to have the next year's Estimates drastically increased.

The Kaiser too, now played his part in increasing British suspicion of Germany. After reading a letter by Esher, which appeared in The Times, February 6, 1908,[21] he wrote a

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[17] Tweedmouth held this position until September 26, 1908.

[18] R. McKenna, 1863 to 1943.
President of the Board of Education 1907 to 1908; First Lord of the Admiralty 1908 to 1911; Home Secretary 1911 to 1915; Chancellor of the Exchequer 1915 to 1916.

[19] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.M., V.II, (Letter to the King - April 1908), 172.

[20] Ibid., V.II, (Letter from the King - April 1908), 172.

[21] Esher had been invited to join the Imperial Maritime League but he refused because they favoured a public inquiry into the navy, and he was too staunch a Fisherite. In reply to the invitation Esher remarked that everyone in Germany, including the Kaiser, hoped for the downfall of Fisher. He allowed the letter to be published, and in reply the Kaiser wrote to Tweedmouth.

personal note to Tweedmouth, which was received February 18, denouncing Fisher and British intentions toward Germany. A furor arose, particularly when it was learned that, in replying to the Kaiser, Tweedmouth had included the Navy Estimates for 1908 to 1909 which had not yet been approved by the House of Commons.[22] The King was very much annoyed over the entire issue and felt that the incident would have serious repercussions as far as Fisher was concerned,[23] but in Esher's eyes the action of the Kaiser was just another German attempt at intervention "in the domestic affairs of another Power. He is trying to treat Fisher as he did Delcasse".[24] Metternich tried to convince the Kaiser to allow the correspondence to be made public but Wilhelm refused, and replied that, "for all this it is not our fleet that is responsible, but the absolute crazy Dreadnought policy of Sir John Fisher and His Majesty ... They will just have to get used to our fleet....[25] The correspondence was not officially made public in England but on

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[22] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 606.

[23] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 287-288.

[24] Ibid., V.II, 285-285.
Theophile Delcasse, 1852 to 1923.
French Foreign Minister from 1898 to 1905. He did much to bring about the Entente with England in 1904 and fell from power in 1905 owing to German pressure following the Morocco crisis of 1905.

[25] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 609.

March 7, 1908, some information about it leaked out, and The Times described the Kaiser's letter as "amounting to an attempt to influence, in German interests, the Minister responsible for our Navy Estimates".[26]

The Kaiser's letter was merely a breech of protocol but so much was made of it that important results followed. Esher said that this incident would "force the Government to give a pledge that in the next three years they will lay down ships enough to ensure our superiority",[27] and with this Fisher agreed, feeling that the Kaiser and The Times together had made Esher's letter a classic.[28] Esher foresaw a bitter fight over the next year's Estimates,[29] even though Asquith had admitted that the Government intended to preserve British naval superiority.[30] In spite of everything the 1908 to 1909 Estimates were accepted by the Cabinet on the grounds that they had decided to do so before the arrival of the Kaiser's letter.[31]

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[26]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 293.

[27]Ibid., V.II, 295.

[28]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., VII, (Letter to Esher - March 1908), 163.

[29]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter from Fisher - March 1908), 298.

[30]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 170.

[31]Ibid., V.II, 166.

By May 5, 1908, McKenna had agreed to four, and if necessary six dreadnoughts for the 1909 to 1910 programme.[32] Fisher was elated but he knew that much opposition would be encountered in the Cabinet, especially from Lloyd George and Churchill. He stressed that the maintenance of sea supremacy depended upon maintaining a 'two keels to one' standard in dreadnoughts.[33] As expected, the Cabinet opposition to this policy was led by Churchill and Lloyd George who took the stand that if the Navy Estimates were going to be increased, then the Army Estimates would have to be reduced. Lloyd George was now the Chancellor of the Exchequer and he was worried about having sufficient money to carry out the social reforms to which the Liberal Party was committed. He said that, "no reductions in Army Estimates next year means no Dreadnoughts."[34] Esher, however, had already pointed out to Lloyd George that a reduction in the Army Estimates would mean a reduction in army personnel. This was impossible unless there was to be a radical change in policy on the part of the Government because, "questions of military finance are interlocked

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[32]Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 186.

[33]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter from Fisher - May 1908), 309.

[34]Ibid., V.II, 326.

with questions of policy ..."[35]

About the navy increases there could be no doubt, irrespective of what happened to the Army Estimates, because the 'invasion inquiry', which ended its hearings on May 29, 1908, gave support to Fisher's views.[36] If the navy was to perform its duty as the primary bastion of defence, in the face of the greatly increased German building programme, the British programme would also have to be increased. There appeared little hope of reaching any agreement with Germany, and certainly none at all, according to Bülow, after King Edward visited Czar Nicholas II, for that simply increased the German talk of 'encirclement'. Tirpitz still believed in the idea of a 'risk navy' (the meaning of which had long since vanished) and he was preparing, should war arise, to do battle with Britain.[37] Fisher was preparing to counter any German threat, and, while he hitherto had succeeded in exercising economy, in reducing the Estimates, and in increasing the efficiency of the navy, he realized that if this efficiency

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[35] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Lloyd George - May 1908), 314.

[36] This was the previously mentioned inquiry conducted by a Sub-Committee of the C.I.D. presided over by Asquith. The inquiry closed May 29, 1908, and while the report was not officially accepted until October 22, there was little or no doubt but that the findings would be accepted.

[37] Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 310-311. King Edward visited the Czar at Reval, July 9-10, 1908.

were to be maintained then the time had come for doubling, or tripling, the number of armoured ships to be laid down in the next few years. The Estimates had to be increased but only as much as was deemed absolutely necessary, as Fisher did not intend to stop exercising economy. He emphasized both economy and efficiency, and not, as was the case with so many Liberals, merely economy.

Lloyd George sought to reduce the Army Estimates by £2,000,000 but was, in return, prepared to increase the funds given to the navy. In fact, he told Metternich that he would be willing to borrow one hundred millions to maintain the relative strength of the fleet,[38] and Fisher was quite prepared to take him at his word![39] This attitude was in keeping with the general feeling in England which was that anything could be tampered with -- but not the fleet.

By July 28, 1908, Fisher had decided that six, and not four dreadnoughts should be laid down between 1909 and 1910. He felt that Britain could produce six armoured ships a year, and so she should, and then slacken off the pace should Germany decide to do so. Four dreadnoughts he felt was the bare minimum needed for the next year and six would

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[38] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 329-330.

[39] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to McKenna - July 1908), 185.

better insure British superiority.[40] Whatever the 'economists' thought of Estimate increases, there is no doubt that, following the German Navy Law of 1908, "it was difficult to avoid tipping the balance in favour of McKenna and the large ship programme".[41] Grey realized this and he now informed the King that the German policy would "necessitate a new British programme of construction next year. It will be demanded by public opinion; it must avowedly be accounted for solely by reference to the German programme, ..."[42]

By the summer of 1908 the Kaiser had taken a very bellicose and uncompromising attitude which did nothing to soothe British fears. Metternich wrote to the Kaiser, shortly before the latter met King Edward at Cronberg in August 1908, that no one could ever persuade the English that the size of fleet contemplated by Germany in 1920 "is a matter of indifference for England. All the technical arguments we adduce to justify this rate of construction only make the English more mistrustful."[43] Tirpitz could never understand Metternich's attitude: he thought that Metternich failed to perceive the

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[40] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to May - September 1908), 196.

[41] J.A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics, V.I, 230.

[42] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 616.

[43] Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 312.

deep, underlying reason for British mistrust, which was German commercial expansion.[44] The Kaiser too, being under the influence of Tirpitz, had no faith in Metternich's judgment, and on July 16, 1908 he summed up his attitude by writing on the latter's despatches that the Navy Law of 1908 would be "carried out to the last tittle; whether the Britons like it or not does not matter. If they want war let them begin; we are not afraid".[45] In this attitude lay the great flaw in the German naval policy -- the absolute disregard for the effect of such a programme upon other countries, especially Britain, which could not but be concerned over the rise of so strong a naval power so close to her own shores. Both the Kaiser and Tirpitz attempted to justify their policy by claiming that it was based on law. This was true, but it never occurred to either (at least it would not be admitted) that those who made the law might also change it.

King Edward visited the Kaiser at Cronberg on August 11, 1908 and naval reductions were discussed, but to no avail.[46]

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[44]Von Tirpitz, Memoirs, v.., 275.

[45]S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 611.

[46]This meeting was called, ostensibly, to choose a successor to the retiring British Ambassador to Berlin, Sir Frank Lascelles. The Kaiser had rejected Fairfax Cartwright, and eventually Sir W.E. Goschen was decided upon. The King was accompanied on this journey by Hardinge, Sir Stanley Clarke, and Major Frederick Ponsonby.

Hardinge suggested to the Kaiser that the pace of construction might be reduced, but nothing was agreed upon as the Kaiser was too concerned over his 'legal' right to have a fleet.[47] The Kaiser then wrote to Bülow, on August 12, an apocryphal account of his conversation with Hardinge, in which he indicated German readiness to fight should there be any outside interference in her naval affairs. He ended his letter by saying that: "the frank conversation with me, had not failed to have its effect. That is always the way to treat Englishmen".[48] Words such as these had their effect, but not in the way the Kaiser had anticipated. Such indiscretions merely riled the English populace to a fever pitch over the German naval threat, and gave great support to the Fisher, "we want eight and we won't wait", school of jingoism.[49] The Kaiser too often allowed fantasy to run away with his reason, his powers of which were not as extensive as he liked to imagine. He fancied himself a master at handling the English, but he failed to realize that no one else was convinced of this. By ignoring British protests the Kaiser,

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[47] C. Hardinge, Old Diplomacy, (London, 1947), pp. 159-161.

[48] Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 313.

[49] This reference is to the agitation which developed in Britain, demanding that eight dreadnoughts be included in the 1909 to 1910 Estimates.

in effect, accelerated the large dreadnought programme being planned by Fisher and McKenna. The Liberal Government could no longer remain unmoved and, on November 12, 1908, Asquith gave definite assurances that the 'two power standard' in battleships would be maintained.[50] The Times, expressing approval over Asquith's statement remarked:

> "If Great Britain did not define her policy, there was a chance that 'some other Power by persistent effort might hope to take us out of the race'."[51]

These words the Kaiser would have done well to heed.

Following the Cronberg discussions King Edward had no doubts as to the policy that should be followed by the Admiralty, and he said that, "'two keels to one' is the only right and safe thing".[52] The English had given up hope of reaching any agreement with Germany, and Tirpitz was convinced that the only agreement Britain would accept would be the complete abandoning of the building of the German fleet.[53] The crowning touch to the Anglo-German tension was the Daily Telegraph

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[50] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 465. Actually, by 'two power standard' Asquith was referring to 'two power' strength plus a margin of ten per cent. Also, when talking of the 'two power standard' British statesmen did not include the United States. War with the United States was completely ruled out.

[51] Ibid., p. 465.

[52] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 343.

[53] Von Tirpitz, Memoirs, V.I, 272.

interview, published on October 29, 1908.[54] This caused consternation both in Germany and abroad, and was certainly not conducive to increasing what little faith people had in the sanity of the Kaiser. Spender remarked, regarding this incident, that:

> ... if some ingenious person had set himself to put into a few thousand words all the things most calculated to set Germans and English by the ears he could hardly have done better.[55]

Some in the Reichstag protested against the validity of the Kaiser's utterances, and emphasized that the German fleet was defensive in character, and not, as the Kaiser said, designed to carry out an imperialistic policy in the Pacific.[56] The British however felt that if Germany had good intentions and desired amicable relations it was time she took positive steps

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[54]This is in reference to a talk between the Kaiser and Colonel S. Wortley, held at the latter's home at Highcliffe. The Kaiser made some fantastic statements such as his being in the minority in Germany of those favouring friendship with England, and that his naval policy was directed against Japan. Bülow gave permission for this interview to be published, without having taken the trouble to read the text.

[55]J.A. Spender, Fifty Years of Europe, p. 316. See also: p. 317.

[56]Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 354. The interview episode came in the middle of the Bosnia -- Herzegovina annexation by Austria, whose intentions, many thought, were known beforehand by Germany. Also in this period, September 1908, occurred the Casablanca incident in Morocco and a Franco-German war appeared imminent. This dispute, however, was settled in February, 1909.

to demonstrate such. As for the defensive character of her fleet, Germany pushed her naval laws so far that they appeared to England as a direct challenge.

II. THE ESTIMATE CRISIS.

The Estimates for 1908 to 1909 called for the laying down of two dreadnoughts and it was thought that this would allow Britain to maintain a reasonable margin of superiority over Germany. It was estimated that by February 1911 Britain would have twelve dreadnoughts to Germany's nine.[57] Counting the pre-*Dreadnought* type battleship as well as the dreadnoughts Britain would still have a great margin of superiority over any of the other powers. The crucial problem however, concerned the number of dreadnoughts to be laid down in 1909 to 1910. Germany, by the new Navy Law in 1908, was to lay down four battleships a year from 1908 to 1911 inclusive, and this caused a certain uneasiness in British public opinion: it was questioned as to whether two dreadnoughts in 1908 to 1909 were really sufficient. Cawdor suggested, on November 29, 1908, that for two successive years Britain should lay down six or seven dreadnoughts a year, so as to insure a

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[57] E.L. Woodward, *op. cit.*, p. 208. As previously noted, Fisher did not get the extra dreadnought promised him should the Second Hague Conference fail.

safe margin in battleships.[58] Asquith had announced that the 'two power standard' was to be maintained, and McKenna had agreed to Fisher's demands for at least four, and possibly six, armoured ships for the year 1909 to 1910. Many Liberals, however, were opposed to any increases in the Estimates and had informed the Prime Minister to that effect,[59] but there was much consternation in Britain, late in 1908, when rumours of German shipbuilding acceleration began to reach the public.

On December 18, 1908, Asquith told the King that Fisher and McKenna were demanding six dreadnoughts for the coming year, because, instead of Germany having thirteen dreadnoughts ready by 1912, through an acceleration in her building programme she would have instead seventeen such ships.[60] Balfour and some of his supporters even went so far as to claim that by that time Germany might have twenty-one dreadnoughts completed. By 1909, built, building, and proposed, Britain would have eighteen armoured ships, providing

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[58] Ibid., pp. 220-221.

[59] See: Ibid., p. 220.

[60] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 206. The German programme called for two dreadnoughts in 1906, three in 1907, and four each in 1908 and 1909 -- making a total of thirteen by 1912.

that six were scheduled for 1909 to 1910.[61] This was hardly a 'two power standard', and more and more it was being realized that the value of the pre-Dreadnought ships was rapidly decreasing. The fears of the Admiralty over the acceleration in the German building programme were not without foundation, for the German Government had secretly purchased an unusually large amount of nickel which was used for guns, gun-mountings, and armour. In addition, there had been a sizable expansion of the Krupp facilities so that enough guns and gun-mountings could be produced to equip eight large battleships a year.[62]

Actually these things were not new, for on May 11, 1906, Mr. Mullerin of the Coventry Ordnance Works wrote to the War Office:

> "... Are you aware of the enormous expenditure now going on at Krupp's for the purpose of manufacturing very large naval guns and mountings quickly?"[63]

This report was ignored at the time because it was felt to be merely an attempt at getting Government contracts. However,

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[61] Ibid., V.II, 206. By 1908 Britain had ten armoured ships built or building, two to be laid down in 1908, and, should the Admiralty get the six they were demanding for 1909 to 1910, this would make a total of eighteen.

[62] Ibid., V.II, 206. The Krupp Company had, in Germany, a monopoly on the supply of heavy guns and armour plating. They had also, in 1901, purchased the Germania Shipbuilding Yard.

[63] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 482.

in July, 1908, Krupp's floated a £2,500,000 loan,[64] and the Admiralty had reason to believe that battleships were being laid down in Germany before the money for such ships had been voted by the Reichstag.[65]

Operating on this assumption, Fisher and the Sea Lords felt that Germany probably would lay down the four armoured ships of the 1909 to 1910 programme, late in 1909, and by following such a practice she would have seventeen armoured ships ready by 1912, or possibly twenty-one if she built at full capacity. On December 30, 1908, McKenna wrote to Grey regarding German shipbuilding, that:

> "... the terms of the Law are no guide to the dates when the ships will be completed. We are bound therefore to look at the German capacity to build, and we can best judge what they can do by what they are doing".[66]

The illusion that Britain could easily build more ships more quickly than Germany was soon dispelled. As early as August, 1907, Die Flotte claimed that private shipbuilding yards in Germany were able to lay down seventeen large battle-

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[64] Ibid., p. 206. Of this loan, £2,000,000 was to be used to expand the Essen Works, and £500,000 was to be spent improving the Germania Shipbuilding Yard.

[65] Ibid., p. 490. Contracts for two battleships of the 1909 to 1910 programme had been placed late in 1908 -- six months in advance and before the money had been voted.

[66] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 207.

ships a year, to be completed within twenty to twenty-four months.[67] The validity of this statement regarding the building capacity is open to question but as far as German building speed was concerned, she was a very close second, if not equal to, that of Britain.

By January, 1909, Fisher and his colleagues had definitely decided to push a six dreadnought programme. There was, however, much opposition from Lloyd George and Churchill neither of whom felt that Germany had accelerated her building programme.[68] Lloyd George thought that Germany in 'anticipating' her building programme was merely trying to relieve the threatened unemployment in her shipyards,[69] and there was some truth in this. Of the two, Churchill was the more strongly opposed to a six ship programme and was prepared to resign rather than accept it.[70]

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[67]J.E. Barker, "The Anit-British Policy of Germany, Nineteenth Century, September 1907, p. 358.
The claim of seventeen ships a year is a gross exaggeration since the Krupp Company, which provided most of the arms and armour for German ships, could outfit approximately eight large ships a year.

[68]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 207.

[69]T. Owen, Tempestuous Journey, (London, 1954), p. 166.

[70]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 370.
Churchill and Lloyd George were later joined by John Morley who was also opposed to a six ship programme.

Behind the scenes the Estimate struggle raged over whether to have a four or a six dreadnought programme for 1909 to 1910, but it was not long before the Conservative press and the Admiralty began agitating for eight. The public was very much excited; the slogan being, "we want eight, and we won't wait",[71] and the failure of the King's visit to Germany in 1909 to provide a naval agreement left no doubt that the Estimates would be increased.[72] By February 16, 1909, Asquith's Cabinet was split over the Estimates, with Churchill, Lloyd George, Morley, and Harcourt, favouring four dreadnoughts, and Grey, Runciman, Crewe, and Buxton, favouring six dreadnoughts immediately, and two more at a later date.[73] To satisfy public opinion and to be assured of British

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[71] J.A. Spender, C.Asquith, Life of Asquith, (London, 1932, 2 V.), V.I, 253.

[72] On February 9, 1909, King Edward paid a state visit to Berlin. Prior to this occasion Metternich had written to Tirpitz: "Unless you make it possible for Prince Bülow to bring off a naval agreement he wants with England, and is doing his utmost to get, this will probably be the last time that an English King comes to visit a German Emperor". Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 407.
For the Kaiser's refusal of any naval agreement, See: Von Bülow, Memoirs, V.II, 418.

[73] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 679.
Sir E. Grey, See footnote 37 Chapter 5.
W. Runciman, (afterwards Viscount Doxford), 1870 to 1949.
Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board 1905 to 1907; Financial Secretary to the Treasury 1907 to 1908; President of the Board of Education 1908 to 1911, of Agriculture 1911 to 1914.

naval supremacy, it was becoming evident that four dreadnoughts would not do because by 1909 Britain had twelve built or building, and she would have only a total of sixteen by 1912. Germany, it was thought, by 1912, would have either thirteen or seventeen, depending upon whether or not she was accelerating her programme. The main difficulty was that no one was quite certain just what Germany was really doing.[74] Grey felt that eight ships were definitely required, and the King remarked that, "however ambiguous the Prime Minister is, we shall have eight Dreadnoughts alright".[75]

Asquith too had come to the conclusion that four dreadnoughts would not be sufficient, yet he was not so sure that the Cabinet would accept a programme of eight, at least all to be laid down in one year. The compromise proposed by Asquith called for four dreadnoughts in the 1909 to 1910 Estimates, with four others to be held in suspension and laid down in the spring of 1910 if necessity so demanded. Mor-

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[73] R.O.A. Crewe (afterwards Marquess), 1858 to 1945. Lord President of the Council 1905 to 1908, 1915 to 1916; Lord Privy Seal 1908, 1912 to 1915; Secretary for the Colonies 1908 to 1910; Secretary for India 1910 to 1915; President of the Board of Education 1916; Ambassador to Paris 1922 to 1928; Secretary for War 1931.
S.C. Buxton (afterwards Viscount), 1853 to 1934. Postmaster-General 1905 to 1910; President of the Board of Trade 1910 to 1914.

[74] Ibid., V.II, 680-681.

[75] Ibid., V.II, 682.

ley [76] and Harcourt [77] hinted at resignation if more than a four ship programme were proposed, but Asquith wrote, on February 20, 1909, that "there is no real danger in the Cabinet".[78] Asquith's proposals were accepted by Grey, Churchill, Lloyd George, and McKenna, at a full Cabinet meeting, held February 25, 1909. This meant, in effect, giving Fisher and McKenna two ships more than they had originally asked for.[79] Churchill remarked of these proceedings that:

> ... a curious and characteristic solution was reached. The Admiralty had demanded six ships; the economists had offered four, and we finally compromised on eight.[80]

Austen Chamberlain[81] had been confident that Fisher and the

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[76] John Morley (afterwards Viscount), 1838 to 1923. Secretary for India 1905 to 1910; Lord President of the Council 1910 to 1914.

[77] Lewis Harcourt (afterwards Viscount), 1863 to 1922. First Commissioner of Works 1905 to 1910, 1915 to 1912; Secretary for the Colonies 1910 to 1915.

[78] J.A. Spender, C. Asquith, op. cit., V.I, 254.

[79] Ibid., V.I, 254. One of the effects of this compromise was Lloyd George's famous Budget of 1909 which was rejected by the Lords. The radicals were determined that if money could be found for armaments, it could also be found for social reforms. Hence, the new system of taxation introduced by Lloyd George in 1909.

[80] W.S. Churchill, The World Crisis, V.I, 136.

[81] Austen Chamberlain (afterwards Sir Austen), 1863 to 1937. Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1895, 1900; Financial Secretary to the Treasury 1900 to 1902; Postmaster-General 1902 to 1903; Chancellor of the Exchequer 1903 to 1906, 1919 to 1921; Secretary for India 1915 to 1917; Lord Privy Seal 1921 to 1922; Foreign Secretary 1924 to 1929; First Lord of the Admiralty 1931.

Board of Admiralty would get as many ships as they demanded. He said to the Second Sea Lord, Sir W.H. May,[82] on February 23, 1909:

> I don't know what you have asked for, but you will get it if you are firm. Tell Fisher from me that ... if the Naval Lords (sic) stand firm, and all are prepared to resign together, they will get their way ....[83]

To this Fisher replied, on February 23, that he was "sitting tight". The result was that at the Cabinet session of February 25, McKenna got the support of Grey, followed by the rest of the Cabinet.[84]

On March 12, 1909, the Estimates for 1909 to 1910 were placed before the House of Commons. These called for the laying down of four dreadnoughts in 1909, two each in July and November, and four more by April 1, 1910, to be ready by 1912, if these were felt to be necessary. Thus, by 1912, it was estimated that Britain would have twenty dreadnoughts,

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[82] Sir William H. May, 1849 to 1930.
A.D.C. 1899 to 1901; Controller of the Navy 1901 to 1905; C.-in-C. of the Atlantic Fleet 1905 to 1907; Second Sea Lord 1907 to 1909; Commander of the Home Fleet 1909 to 1911; C.-in-C. at Plymouth 1911 to 1913.

[83] Sir C. Petrie, The Life and Letters of The Rt. Hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain, (London, 1938, 2 V.), V.I, 224.

[84] Ibid., V.I, 224.

to Germany's seventeen.[85] This scheme pleased neither the Opposition, who called for more ships, nor the radical Liberals who called for fewer.[86]

In order to allay the fears of Britain losing her sea supremacy, Fisher and McKenna already had asked that the four contingent dreadnoughts be made definite. On March 4, 1909, a memorandum had been sent to Asquith asking that these four ships be made absolute in July, when the Estimates were voted upon.[87] Esher agreed and he felt that Balfour would put pressure upon the Government to have all eight dreadnoughts commenced in 1909. Therefore, he felt it imperative that the Admiralty also put pressure upon Asquith.[88] Balfour held that the rate of German construction had not been correctly estimated and in consequence the Government had not fulfilled its obligation to maintain a 'two power standard'; in fact, he

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[85] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., pp. 222-226. Just in case these four ships would be found to be necessary, the Government decided to begin gathering the material for them.

[86] Public support for a large navy was being aided by the 'Islander Scheme' society, founded by Esher to propagate the idea that the British Empire floated upon the British Navy. Esher was of the opinion that such a society would "do more for a big navy than the Government Bill and all the Admiralty bounce". Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 372.
By 1912 Fisher estimated that this society had approximately one hundred thousand members.

[87] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 209.

[88] Viscount Esher, F.G.D.N., V.II, 376-377.

said, there was some question as to whether a 'one power standard' was being maintained.[89] Asquith admitted on March 16, 1909, that the German programme surprised him and showed that Britain no longer had an advantage in rapidity of construction. A few weeks later he re-defined the 'two power standard' as a "fleet sufficient to hold the sea against any reasonably probable combination".[90] In effect this was really a 'one power standard', but as Churchill said in 1912, as long as the pre-Dreadnought ships retained their fighting value this new definition gave Britain a sixty per cent superiority.[91] McKenna concurred with Asquith's stand.

Asquith as a result of the 'scare' was faced with a second Cabinet crisis, over the question of whether or not, as Fisher wished, eight dreadnoughts would definitely be included in the 1909 to 1910 Estimates. Esher, as we have seen, had urged Fisher to insist that the four contingent ships be started in 1909. Churchill and Lloyd George again opposed McKenna,[92] but by March 20, 1909, Fisher was quite certain that

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[89] J.E. Barker, "German Armaments and The Liberal Government", Nineteenth Century, April 1909, p. 570.

[90] Ibid., p. 570.

[91] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., pp. 471-472.

[92] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 378.

all the ships he asked for would be forthcoming, and he wrote that irrespective how much the Prime Minister hedged the question, "he knows we are going on with them".[93] He wrote to Esher on March 21, that if by chance the Government refused the eight ships, he and the other Sea Lords were prepared to resign.[94] Balfour and the Opposition were certainly not content with Asquith's naval policy, and on March 29 they moved a vote of censure which, though defeated, was indicative of the great excitement which had been aroused over the naval debates.[95]

The crisis dragged on, with the Cabinet divided, but Fisher and McKenna received very strong support from Grey who stressed that the lack of information as to German acceleration made an eight dreadnought programme the wisest policy. Moreover, should eight ships be included in the 1909 to 1910 Estimates, they should in no way affect the Estimates for the following year.[96] Fisher was strongly in favour of this for he believed that the ordinary money votes of the German Navy were quite sufficient to allow them to have seventeen dread-

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[93]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Davidson - March 20), 209.

[94]Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 189.

[95]E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 231.

[96]Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 190.

noughts by 1912.[97]

Germany denied having accelerated her programme and was somewhat apprehensive about the proposed British eight ship programme. Tirpitz said that such a programme could be made palatable to the British public only by "comparing the German fleet as it would be in 1920, with the British fleet as it was in 1908".[98] Tirpitz, however, ignored the fact that if dreadnoughts alone were considered then British superiority was not as great as he argued. The dreadnought decreased the fighting value of the older type ships, just as many of the dreadnought opponents had argued in 1905, and it was the realization of this fact which caused such opposition to the Government and the Admiralty in 1909. Between April and June, 1909 some attempts were made by Kiderlen Waechter, temporarily acting as the German Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to get a naval agreement and in June Bülow called a naval conference in Berlin, but it was soon discovered that he sought nothing permanent in the way of an agreement with England. He merely sought an agreement which would allow Germany to pass the 'danger-zone', but, what was to happen when the German

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[97] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 239.

[98] Von Tirpitz, Memoirs, V.I, 269.

fleet was built up?[99]

The failure of these attempts plus the fact that both Austria and Italy were launching 'four dreadnought' programmes, served to convince the Cabinet die-hards that the eight ship programme was the only feasible one for Britain to adopt.[100] Another factor that counted was the archaic nature of the French fleet, and Britain was unable to rely upon the adequacy of the fleet in the Mediterranean.[101] The result was that on July 26, 1909, McKenna announced that the four contingent dreadnoughts would be included in the 1909 to 1910 programme, thus giving a total of eight ships for that year.[102] It was also stipulated that the addition of these four extra ships would be "'without Prejudice' to the 1910 to 1911 programme".[103]

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[99] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 263. Kiderlen Waechter sought an entente arrangement but Britain feared that this would allow Germany to consolidate her hegemony on the continent. The 'danger zone' referred to here was that time, as expressed by Tirpitz, which it would take Germany to build up her 'risk navy' -- during which period she had to be prepared to face opposition from other naval powers (i.e. Britain). The difficulty was that with the Anglo-German naval rivalry the 'danger zone' was always extended, and never overcome.
For further information regarding the attempts at agreement - See: E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 269 ff.

[100] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 208.

[101] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 245. This state of the French navy was revealed by a committee of investigation which reported on June 28, 1909.

[102] Ibid., p. 244.

[103] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 208.

The great concern over the state of the navy, which increased from the autumn of 1908 to the summer of 1909, provided convenient propaganda for Fisher's critics. Fisher, it was claimed, had done nothing but bow to the 'Little Englanders'. The 'sleep'[104] which he had recommended to the public, both the Government and the Admiralty had been indulging in, to the detriment of the safety of the nation.[105] This, however, was hardly true because it was due to the efforts of Fisher that, between 1904 and 1909, the navy was transformed into an effective instrument of war, and furthermore, as early as December 3, 1907, Fisher had sent a memorandum to Tweedmouth advocating the addition of two dreadnoughts to the 1909 to 1910 programme. The Cabinet had refused this request but in 1908 the Sea Lords stood firm.[106] This could hardly be considered 'napping', and it shows that Fisher was quite well aware of what he considered to be acceleration in the German building programme. Some critics were foolish enough to suggest that a large building programme would solve all the naval problems because Germany in trying to compete, would suffer

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[104] In 1907 Fisher gave a speech in which he said that the navy was then so well prepared, that people in Britain need have no fears, but could sleep quietly in their beds.

[105] See: Erroll, "A Rude Awakening", Nineteenth Century, April 1909, pp. 565-569.

[106] R.H. Bacon, Life of Jellicoe , pp. 157-158.

financial ruin.[107] This line of argument was typical of those who, unlike Fisher, failed to realize that dreadnoughts cost money, and that the value of a navy depends to a large extent upon its preparedness and efficiency, which are not governed only by the number of ships available. The idea of attempting to discourage Germany financially was nonsense for such people overlooked the fact that the English were already being far more heavily taxed than the Germans, and Germany was certainly wealthy enough that she could "stand an almost unlimited increase of her naval expenditure".[108]

Actually there was no German acceleration. It is true that some German ships were laid down in advance of their being approved by the Reichstag, but these were not finished in advance of the normal time. The Cologne Gazette, on March 21, 1909, announced that by 1912 Germany would have only thirteen armoured ships completed, and not seventeen or twenty-one as was thought in British circles.[109] This paper also pointed out that two battleships were laid down ahead of time to avoid an anticipated lay-off of shipyard workers, and, because of

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[107] Erroll, "A Rude Awakening", Nineteenth Century, April 1909, p. 568.

[108] J.E. Barker, "The Naval Policy of Germany", Nineteenth Century, May 1908, p. 845. See also: p. 846.

[109] W.H. White, "The Naval Situation", Nineteenth Century, April 1909, p. 547.
Actually, as mentioned earlier, Germany had only nine dreadnoughts completed by 1912.

the depressed conditions more favourable terms were obtained. The construction of these two ships was still to take the usual thirty-six months, from the date on which the Reichstag voted the Estimates.[110] However, Britain was so distrustful of Tirpitz and German intentions that an eight-ship programme was needed to re-assure public opinion.[111] Germany, by April, 1912, was actually behind in her building programme, having only nine completed, while Britain had fifteen. The four extra ships gave Britain the necessary margin of superiority in 1915, when she needed it most,[112] and Churchill later admitted that he had erred in opposing the eight-ship policy of Fisher and McKenna.[113]

The acceleration 'scare' seems to indicate that the British N.I.D. left something to be desired, and many felt that changes should be made at the Admiralty. Esher and Haldane favoured the creation of a Naval General Staff, to increase efficiency, but they also realized that this would not take place as long as Fisher were First Sea Lord.[114]

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[110] Ibid., p. 549.

[111] E.L. Woodward, op. cit., p. 240 ff.

[112] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 208.

[113] W.S. Churchill, The World Crisis, V.I, 37-38.

[114] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter to M.V.B. - March 1909), 374.

As noted previously, increased Estimates were felt necessary by 1909, for not only was there the fear of German acceleration, but the other two Triple Alliance powers, Italy and Austria, were embarking upon dreadnought programmes. Also, since the Russian fleet had been destroyed at Tsushima, and the French fleet proved to be in a poorer condition than was formerly thought, a greater burden was placed upon England. Hurd remarks that:

> It is one of the unhappy chances of diplomacy that Great Britain should be party to a triple entente in which she herself has to bear practically all the naval burden.[115]

These circumstances necessitated Britain increasing her building programme.

III. THE BERESFORD DISPUTE AND THE ADMIRALTY INQUIRY.

Throughout 1908 and into 1909 Beresford continued to create difficulties for Fisher. There was a definite schism in the naval ranks, which was known to the public, and the agitation for an inquiry into Admiralty policy, if not always openly expressed as being desirable, ever lingered close to the surface of events. Early in 1908 Fisher's supporters urged that discipline be restored either by Beresford abstaining from his attacks on the Admiralty or by hauling down his flag.[116]

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[115] A.S. Hurd, "The Balance of Naval Power", Nineteenth Century, June 1909, p. 1078.

[116] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 42.

This forcing of Beresford to discontinue his insubordinate tactics was not done until 1909, thus leaving him many months during which time he intensified his efforts to discredit Fisher.

Beresford attempted to induce members of the Cabinet to support an inquiry into Admiralty policy, but Grey was definitely opposed. He told Fisher that such a step would be fatal since no one in the Cabinet really understood anything about naval plans, strategy, or tactics.[117] Grey seemed to think that some understanding might be reached with Beresford but Fisher was dubious.[118] Fisher, however, had received, both from Campbell-Bannerman, and from Asquith, a promise that there would be no such inquiry,[119] but he soon became somewhat worried over Beresford's efforts to get the support of some of the Members of Parliament, including that of Carson.[120]

The controversy between Beresford and Fisher centred

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[117] Ibid., V.II, 155.

[118] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Esher - January 1908), 160.

[119] Ibid., V.II, 42.

[120] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to White - February 1908), 165. See also: Letter to Cawdor - January 1908, 159.
Lord Edward Carson, 1854 to 1935.
Solicitor-General for Ireland 1892; Solicitor-General 1900 to 1906; Attorney-General 1915; First Lord of the Admiralty 1917; Member of the War Cabinet without Portfolio 1917 to 1918. Carson later came to support Beresford. See: A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, (Letter to Esher - August 1909), 260-261.

about the war plans issue. Fisher made it quite clear to Grey that he did not consider the Cabinet capable of making any decisions regarding naval war plans and, if they were not satisfied with his services, he would resign, but he emphasized that "while I am where I am, I must press for Lord Charles Beresford obeying orders instead of wanting to give them".[121] In Fisher's eyes the forming of war plans was a task for the First Sea Lord because, "plans of war imply secrecy -- secrets which should be locked in the breast of the War Director alone,..."[122] Here Fisher was on very tenuous ground because he may have had excellent plans and he may have been able to make them work, but it was wrong to keep everybody else in the dark about them. With war plans Fisher trusted no one, except Wilson. He even refused to make any disclosures to the Prime Minister because the essence of success in war is suddenness and unexpectedness, and these he felt, required the utmost secrecy.[123]

Neither was the C.I.D., a body concerned with defence matters, given any inkling as to what Fisher's plan of operations would be should hostilities break out,[124] and as early as

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[121] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Grey - January 1908), 157.

[122] Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Tweedmouth - January 1908), 158.

[123] Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 183. See also: Lord Fisher, Records, pp. 94-95.

[124] Ibid., p. 193.

1906 Fisher told Esher that his plans were so secret that he would not even commit them to paper![125] It is unfortunate that Fisher so distrusted the C.I.D. and any notion pertaining to a Naval General Staff. Only by setting up a General Staff could there by any real co-ordination between the military and the naval forces in peacetime, but Fisher failed to understand this.[126] Likewise he really did not grasp the idea that the C.I.D. was purely an advisory body with no executive authority.[127] Esher had attempted to point out to Fisher the dangers of his 'one man rule' at the Admiralty, and that it was impossible for the First Sea Lord to handle all the problems which concerned the navy. He had constantly reminded Fisher of the valuable support the C.I.D. could give him against 'Beresford and Company', and stressed that in time of war he would be supreme, and offered to strike a bargain on the basis of --"you will back the Defence Committee for all you are worth in Peace, on the condition that its doors are locked, and the key in your pocket, in War".[128] Fisher however,

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[125]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter to M.V.B. - December 1906), 209-210.

[126]Viscount Esher, Essays, p. 135.

[127]Ibid., p. 147.

[128]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter to Fisher - October 1907), 251.

was not interested in bargains. He wanted to be, and in fact was, a dictator -- he never denied the fact, and he had no intention of brooking what he considered to be interference from the C.I.D. It was this obstinacy that caused Esher to feel, along with Haldane, that, "the weak point in our national armour, is not the material or personnel of the Navy, but the Board of Admiralty, its want of modern ideas and its inefficient organization".[129]

There is no doubt but that Fisher could have used the backing of the C.I.D. against his opposition. There were many who were so worried over the navy schism that they agreed with the Prince of Wales, who suggested that it might be better for all concerned if Fisher were to cede his place to someone else.[130] It was reported in The Times on July 6, 1908, that Fisher and Beresford were no longer on speaking terms.[131] The Times, on July 7, carried an article on the row between Beresford and Scott over the 'signal incident',[132] and the Spectator con-

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[129] Ibid., V.II, 492. [130] Ibid., V.II, 322.

[131] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 42-43. At a May levée Beresford snubbed Fisher by refusing the latter's hand.

[132] Ibid., V.II, 43. During manoeuvres Beresford signalled to Scott to turn, but the latter refused to do so as such a move would have caused a collision between the cruisers Good Hope and Argyll. Beresford sought to have Scott court-martialed but McKenna was opposed as it would just create more scandal. In August 1908 Scott was transferred to a new command and flew his flag until February, 1909. See also: P. Scott, footnote 22, Chapter 4.

cluded, on July 12, "that there are no indispensible men in the Navy, and that the nation can get along without even a Fisher, a Charles Beresford or a Percy Scott".[133]

McKenna had attempted to bring Beresford to heed authority, but this was of no avail.[134] Beresford, Fisher discovered, had even been writing to the King, but he found no supporter in King Edward, who said of him to Fisher that, "his overweening vanity and love of notoriety are simply intolerable".[135] On the other hand, however, Fisher had qualms about Beresford's threatened resignation because he felt that if Beresford left the navy, he would sit in Parliament where it would be impossible to exercise any control over him whatsoever. Finally McKenna, on December 16, 1908, ordered Beresford to strike his flag on March, 1909, when the Home and Channel Fleets were combined. McKenna had attempted to have Beresford removed the previous July but there were Cabinet objections, but this time he succeeded.[136] Fisher was de-

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[133]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter to Knollys - July 1908), 328. The nation could well have done without Beresford, but hardly without Fisher and Scott for Jutland showed that Britain was JUST ready -- and this was certainly not due to any contribution by Beresford.

[134]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 183. Fisher at first thought that McKenna was bargaining privately with Beresford, but he soon realized that such was not the case.

[135]Ibid., V.II, (Letter to Knollys - September 1908),193.

[136]Ibid., V.II, 43. Bacon gives the date of McKenna's order to Beresford as December 19. See: R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher,

lighted with the fall of Beresford, but his delight was somewhat premature because Beresford was not finished agitating, and before he was, Fisher too was to fall.

On April 2, 1909, a few days after his retirement, Beresford wrote to Asquith describing as defective the distribution of the fleet in home waters. The fleet, he said, was by no means ready for war. He also criticized the lack of proper machinery at the Admiralty for the preparation of war plans.[137] Asquith, as a result, on April 19, wrote to the King, and explained that in view of the rancour and insubordination that had prevailed in the navy for the past eighteen months, he would have to appoint a committee to inquire into Admiralty policy. This committee was to be a Sub-Committee of the C.I.D. and he personally, would preside over it.[138] The Sub-Committee was to consist, besides Asquith, of Crewe, Morley, Grey and Haldane, all of whom were Cabinet Ministers.[139]

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[136] V.II, 49. Beresford's retirement, scheduled for March 24, 1909, was announced publicly February 15, 1909. See: S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 600.
Fisher claimed that with the 'war scare' which followed the Casablanca incident of September 25, 1908, McKenna recognized that Beresford was unfit for a war command and decided to remove him.

[137] Ibid., V.II, 210-211.

[138] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 601. At this time King Edward was on a Mediterranean cruise but he replied on April 25, concurring with Asquith's intentions.

[139] Ibid., V.II, 602. The original Sub-Committee Asquith had in mind contained Sir Arthur Wilson and Esher, but not Morley. See: Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 385.

The announcement of this body was made in the House of Commons on April 22.

Not only was his Admiralty Board to be on trial but Fisher was soon doubly humiliated when Bacon's letters became public. They seemed to give backing to one of Beresford's charges that "a system of espionage had been worked from the Admiralty".[140] Fisher was so furious over the proposed inquiry that he threatened to resign, but was dissuaded from so doing.[141] In spite of everything, however, the Observer, on May 30, could state that, "a splendid balance will stand to the credit of Sir John Fisher's account in the national ledger".[142]

The Asquith Sub-Committee held fifteen meetings between April 27 and July 13, during which time McKenna spoke for the Admiralty, with Fisher being called upon only to answer questions.[143] Fisher was well aware of his unpopularity and

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[140] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 211. Bacon's letters are the ones referred to in Chapter V, which Fisher had printed to use against his opponents.

[141] Ibid., V.II, 211. On April 13 Esher had written to Balfour to say that Fisher could not resign if he wished to die a dignified death. Esher had previously asked Fisher to announce his intention of resigning on October 21, 1909, the fifth anniversary of his becoming First Sea Lord. Fisher had made no such announcement so now he had to stay until the inquiry was over.

See: Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 382, 355.

[142] Ibid., V.II, 212.

[143] Ibid., V.II, 212. S. Lee gives the number of meetings as twelve. See: S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 603.

of the efforts of some to force him to resign by threatening to publish some of his private letters to various people. Whatever ideas he had had in April of resigning however, had been dispelled by July 3, when he wrote to Esher: "I don't regret a word I ever wrote .... Anyhow I won't be blackmailed! ... I am going to fight to the finish."[144] Throughout the inquiry the Board of Admiralty stood by Fisher, and upheld, in direct contradiction to Beresford, the overwhelming superiority and reserve strength of the fleet, and the rapid mobilization allowed by the system of nucleus crews.[145] Both the King and Esher remained loyal friends and Esher wrote to Fisher on August 4, that: "... I never forget what the Army and Navy were 8 years ago, and what they are now!"[146]

The report of the Sub-Committee was issued as a Parliamentary Paper on August 12, 1909, a paper which it was noted "had not sustained the general indictment".[147] The Sub-Committee found nothing seriously wrong with the arrangement of the fleet and there was no dangerous deficiency in the navy

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[144]Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 190.

[145]S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 603.

[146]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 398. Yet the Spectator, on July 12, 1908, could claim that the country could do without Fisher!

[147]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 212. S. Lee gives the report date as August 13. See: S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 603.

or any danger to the country. It was intimated, however, that on the Fisher-Beresford disagreement there were faults on both sides, and while the policies of the Admiralty were not ideally perfect, they were hampered by the lack of cordial relations between Fisher and Beresford.[148] The entire report however, smacked of politics for while Fisher was generally upheld no action was to be taken against Beresford. Certainly no member of the Sub-Committee had a sufficient knowledge of naval affairs to pass judgment upon Admiralty policy. All the evidence was submitted to Wilson, but the very fact that he was not a member of the investigating body shows the weakness of Asquith in bowing to Beresford's objection to Wilson being appointed.[149] The report also stated that it looked forward, in the future, to the development of a Naval War Staff.[150]

Asquith shirked his responsibilities by not giving Fisher full support from the moment he received Beresford's letter. Without making such a statement, Asquith allowed himself to be put into an impossible position when Beresford was allowed openly to denounce the Admiralty, for this "caused popu-

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[148] S. Lee, Edward VII, V.II, 603.

[149] See the account in: R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.II, 50-56.

[150] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 213.

lar opinion to be biased in his favour".[151] Esher had little praise for the report. He felt that Fisher would be hurt, because the Cabinet did not give him full support, and Beresford would be furious. The report, he added, should have contained "words of appreciation of the value of naval reforms introduced by Selborne, which lie at the root of the policy C.B. (Charles Beresford) attacked".[152]

Esher was correct in estimating Fisher's reaction to the verdict, for Fisher felt that he had been very much deserted by the Cabinet, and, "he never ceased believing that the Committee members had been afraid, and even terrified, of Beresford and his minions".[153] Beresford, however, was anything but furious. In fact, he was very much satisfied because he claimed that there was now a large, homogeneous fleet in home waters under a single supreme commander, the nucleus crew ships were to be regarded strictly as reserve ships, and a Naval War Staff was to be created.

Had Beresford half the intelligence he liked to credit himself with he might have realized that of these three changes, only the one dealing with the creation of a War Staff was in

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[151] R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.II, 50.

[152] Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, (Letter to Balfour - August 1909), 400.

[153] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 214.

any way due to his complaints, for the other two resulted directly from the fleet organization policies instituted by Fisher between 1904 and 1907. The Guardian was not slow to recognize this, and it said, on August 17, 1909:

> "Only Beresford himself can explain how a scheme which in April was a danger to the country can now be cited as the fruits of his judgment and sagacity."[154]

As far as a Naval War Staff was concerned the Admiralty, before the Beresford hearings, was toying with the idea of a Navy War Council, in order to appease the critics. This was formally proclaimed on October 11, 1909, but it was not a true General Staff because its functions were purely advisory and it met only when summoned by the First Sea Lord.[155] Fisher denied that the Admiralty had been wanting in strategical thought, a fault which the War Staff was supposed to overcome, and he supported this by noting his establishment of the Naval War College at Portsmouth.[156] It is true that this War College did something in the field of strategy and tactics but it was not, and was no adequate substitute for, a General Staff. Mahan considered a war college to be essential to supply "a

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[154] Ibid., V.II. 213.

[155] Ibid., V.II, 214. The War Council at the Admiralty was to consist of the First Sea Lord, Assistant Secretary of the Admiralty, D.N.I., and the Director of the Naval Mobilization Department, which was a newly created position.

[156] Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 191.

knowledge, ingrained, of the principles and methods involved in the correct conduct of war, ..."[157] This was certainly necessary if the most efficient use was to be made of the army and the navy, because the weakness of Britain as a military power lay "in the absence of co-ordination of our fighting strength on sea and land".[158] However, the ideas of a General Staff and of co-ordination were never grasped by Fisher who felt that such planning establishments on shore merely converted "splendid sea officer into very indifferent Clerks".[159] He held that the First Sea Lord must be supreme, and he was, but he tended to generalize about war without having thought out a logical and scientific system as to how such a war was to be fought.[160]

Esher felt that the important issues facing the navy were the restoration of discipline and the establishment of a war staff. He advocated that a sub-committee of the C.I.D. be set up to investigate war staff questions, although he was doubtful if any concrete action would be taken as long as Asquith was Prime Minister. As for Fisher, Esher was of the

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[157] W.D. Puleston, Mahan, p. 200. See also: p. 95.

[158] W.G. Knox, "A Glance at a War Horizon", Nineteenth Century, June 1909, p. 931.

[159] Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 117.

[160] See: A.J. Marder, Portrait of An Admiral, pp. 48-49.

opinion that he should be given some honour and then be retired.[161] He said of Fisher that he was a "great public servant, ... devoted to his profession and to the state he is the victim of Asquith's want of moral courage".[162]

By this time Fisher was so unpopular that his retirement was a necessity for it was doubtful if any other Government would keep him.[163] There were soon rumours that Fisher planned to retire and receive a peerage, and by October, 1909, these were substantiated. Asquith agreed to grant Fisher a peerage if he retired,[164] and Fisher, in late October, agreed to do so, because of his failure to receive the full backing of the Cabinet against Beresford, and also, he wanted to be succeeded by Sir Arthur Wilson while the latter was still of age. Fisher's resignation was finally announced as being effective as of January 25, 1910, and Wilson was officially appointed as successor on December 2, 1909.[165] On November 9, 1909, King Edward's birthday, 'Jackie' Fisher was raised to

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[161]Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 402.

[162]Ibid., V.II, 407.

[163]Ibid., V.II, 409. It was thought, at this time, that the Liberal Government might fall owing to the difficulties which arose when the House of Lords rejected the 1909 to 1910 budget of Lloyd George.

[164]Ibid., V.II, 412.

[165]A.J. Marder, F.G.D.N., V.II, 216-217.

the peerage as Baron Fisher of Kilverstone, much to the disgust of his foes.[166]

With Fisher's resignation an era came to an end. The 'Fisher Era' in the Royal Navy, if compared with many other 'eras' in history was comparatively short, but if it be judged, as Fisher would have wished, on the basis of 'quality,' then, in its way, it has few peers.

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[166] Ibid., V.II, 217. See also: Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters, V.II, 421.

It is interesting to note that in his later years Fisher became, outwardly at least, quite republican in sentiment. He advocated, for example, the abolition of titles, yet not only did he gladly accept one himself, but he was a little disappointed at not receiving a Viscountcy.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR JOHN FISHER: AN ESTIMATE

Having seen Fisher in action it remains now to evaluate him and to attempt to establish his importance in history. The epithet 'great' is not commonly applied to a sailor, but Fisher's claim is irrefutable. In the navy lay British strength, and, as Bacon remarked, as St. Paul's Cathedral is the magnum opus of Sir Christopher Wren, so the modern Royal Navy stands as a monument to Lord Fisher.[1] Without the navy the Empire would not have been, and without Fisher the modern navy would not be.

Certainly English fears and the changes in English policy were embodied in the reforms of Sir John Fisher. He was a man feared in both England and Germany, and in both countries was regarded by many as a megalomaniac and a warmonger. Both charges are true. His megalomaniac tendencies can be seen in his shipbuilding policy for no ship was large enough or carried enough guns; bigger and better ones could be built and he did his utmost, while First Sea Lord, to have them built. He was a warmonger in that he believed war with Germany was inevitable, so the sooner it came the better.

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[1] R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, XVII.

Germany was the arch-enemy; she planned to challenge Britain at sea; she planned to dismember the British Empire and thus disrupt the efforts of the Anglo-Saxons in their God-given task of spreading civilization. These things Fisher believed motivated German policy, but as far as he was concerned Germany was not going to succeed. He was able to push through such drastic naval changes between 1902 and 1906 because, after the turn of the century, others in England were becoming quite perturbed about German ambitions, and they began to think that quite possibly Fisher was correct in his views. Had Fisher been First Sea Lord under more normal conditions he would undoubtedly have introduced reforms where needed, but it was the fear of Germany that allowed him to exercise his talents to the full and to perform the 'clean sweep' so far as naval reforms were concerned. He certainly lived up to his motto of acting like a mole, known only by upheavals![2]

Fisher's great contribution lay not in the field of tactics or strategy but in materiel. He was "the genius incarnate of technical change".[3] He emphasized that the navy had to be prepared, put in a state of being instantly ready for war, and he was bold enough to suggest that these conditions did not exist in 1900. By the turn of the century

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[2]Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 60.

[3]D. Mathew, The Naval Heritage, p. 241.

the Royal Navy was dominated by 'old fossils' possessed of mid-Victorian ideas of ships with sail and rigging. New ideas, new men, and new equipment were needed, and these things Fisher was instrumental in supplying. To bring about such changes in as conservative, tradition-minded an institution as the Royal Navy was no small task, but to have done so in a period of six years was almost the accomplishment of the impossible. Such a feat involved stepping upon many toes and arousing the ire of the conservative influences, but such opposition was no deterrent to Fisher -- if anything it spurred him on, and he was willing to stand or fall on the strength of his own convictions. Fisher's methods were radical and violent but they were the only methods capable of arousing the navy from its slumber and making it aware of its decrepit, inept, condition. What was once a peaceful service was rudely awakened, and of Fisher's methods Churchill remarked that, "he shook them and beat them and cajoled them out of slumber into intense activity. But the Navy was not a pleasant place while this was going on ..."[4]

Fisher was not popular, but he never expected he would be. He had to choose between popularity and reforming the navy, and having little interest in the former, he forged

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[4]W.S. Churchill, World Crisis, V.I, 74.

ahead with the latter. He felt as though he were on a Messianic mission, convinced that he was right (which was usually the case, as even Churchill admitted), and seeing that he would need some support for his schemes he cultivated friendship with those people most likely to obtain backing for him. These included Viscount Esher,[5] the Four First Lords[6] under whom he served while First Sea Lord (and dominated them all), and King Edward.[7] Fisher considered the support of the King vital to his reform programme, and the King remained throughout a loyal friend, giving Fisher wise counsel, and convinced of the correctness of the policies prescribed by by his First Sea Lord.[8]

Fisher was not insane, even though many felt that he had over stepped the fine dividing line separating genius and insanity. If anything he was a genius, with perhaps a tinge

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[5]Fisher was fortunate in having the support of Viscount Esher, a man who moved and was very influential in high circles. Esher was possessed of a very acute sense of perception, and of him Spender wrote: "Esher seemed to know everything and know it correctly ... I was quickly struck by his extraordinary fund of knowledge and his complete detachment from all political factions. He seemed to be handling all the axes and yet have none to grind".
See: J.A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics, V.I., 186.

[6]The four First Lords were: Lords Selborne, Cawdor, Tweedmouth, and Mr. McKenna.

[7]See: F. Ponsonby, Recollection of Three Reigns, p. 129 f.

[8]See: Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 19.

of madness which gave him his dynamic energy and burning zeal, thus allowing him to do in less than a decade work which could easily have spanned a life-time. Neither was he perfect; he made his mistakes as humans are prone to do, but the important thing is that he acted instead of merely talking. He introduced changes where he saw the need of such, and was not content, as were so many, to look at the Royal Navy through rose tinted glasses and so convince himself of its perfection. Rather, he looked for the weaknesses in the service and set about to correct them, thus doing what a few saw the need of but which none other was able or willing to do.

Fisher, even in 1910, did not want to retire but it was a good thing that he did. He felt that there was so much more still to be done and that he was quite capable of doing it. This was undoubtedly true but the years from 1904 to 1909 saw such a great upheaval in the navy, with traditions thrown out and the general unity of the service broken, that time was needed to allow the changes introduced by Fisher to become assimilated into the naval fabric. He was criticized for damaging the navy, which in a sense he did, but after he had left office and the wounds were allowed to heal, the navy was a much better institution for having been under the rule of 'Jackie' Fisher. Jellicoe readily admits the wisdom of Fisher's policies, and without Fisher the decision of Jutland would

have been much different.[9] Churchill certainly thought enough of the man to call him back as First Sea Lord shortly after the opening of World War I.

Fisher was a unique individual, and one of the greatest, if not the greatest Englishman the twentieth century has yet produced. Possessed of foresight, energy, courage, and a tenacity of purpose, he appeared on the scene just in time, as is so often the case in English history, to clear away the naval morass and substitute for it a strong and efficient service. His overhauling of the navy and its administration, while not perfect, was enough, as World War I proved, and however much the critics raged against him they overlooked the fact that he was the price the Royal Navy had to pay for fifty years of neglect. He emphasized four prerequisites for a 'big life' -- a great inspiration, a great cause, a great battle, and a great victory.[10] On this basis Fisher's claim to greatness cannot be denied. He was truly a titan among reformers.

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[9]See: Lord Jellicoe, The Grand Fleet, pp. ix, 34-35.

[10]Lord Fisher, Memories, (Letter to Esher - February 1910), p. 195.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.[1]

Committees of investigation into naval education.

I. ADMIRAL SHADWELL, 1870.

The report of this committee recommended that naval instruction afloat be discontinued, and this was to be accomplished by:

(i) All training, both primary and secondary, to be conducted in shore colleges (training ships), thus eliminating the old 'half-time' system under which a cadet, while at sea, was to spend a number of hours per day in formal study.

(ii) An extension of the shore-training period by one year to three years (with a summer cruise in a training ship in the last year), and then followed by one year in a sea-going training ship.

Thus a four year programme was advocated designed to remove the difficulties arising out of the attempt to combine the position of officer and schoolboy.[2]

II. ADMIRAL RICE, 1875.

The proposals of the Shadwell Report were endorsed, but

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[1] These notes have been taken largely from an article by J.S. Corbett, Monthly Review, September, 1902.

[2] Fisher established a four year programme but the entire period was to be spent on shore.

the following additional recommendations were made.

(i) The replacement of training ships by a shore college (to definitely end teaching at sea), and the assimilation of the college as closely as possible with the public schools.[3]

(ii) A three year course (like Shadwell) with entry at the age of twelve.[4]

(iii) The cadet was to go to sea as a midshipman, at least by the age sixteen, for a three year period: then to write the sub-lieutenant examinations and, after another two years, the lieutenant's examinations.[5]

The idea behind this report was to lay a solid foundation for future technical training but none of the proposals were instituted.

III. MR. O. GORDON, 1877.

This body pointed out that the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, supposedly a college for higher education, was really doing nothing but re-teaching subjects not properly learned at sea, plus a few of the Britannia subjects. They noted that this was due, in part at least, to the poor facilities and

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[3]This came with Fisher but he was opposed to having any connection with the public schools.

[4]Fisher introduced early-entry, and a four year course.

[5]This came with Fisher.

poor instructors. The 'half-time' system was also criticized.

This report was ignored and not many years passed before a new inquiry had to be made.

IV. ADMIRAL LUARD, 1885.

This committee found that none of the previously advocated reforms had been instituted and they felt that the re-teaching of subjects was necessary because the Britannia course was too difficult to be mastered by young minds. Therefore, at no stage were the elementary subjects sufficiently well mastered.

The report, which contained two parts, recommended a complete change of the then existing system.

A. Reforms and modifications to be introduced immediately pending complete reconstruction. These included:

(i) The raising of the Britannia entry age of thirteen to fourteen years.

(ii) Simplification of the Britannia curriculum so as to be suitable for coverage in two years.

The result was that the entry age was slightly raised.[6]

B. The suggested line along which the reconstruction should take place, including a divisioning of education into elementary, secondary, and advanced, was as follows:

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[6]The age of entry was again raised under Goschen in 1898, but Fisher was much opposed.

(i) Elementary. - up to the sixteenth year. This was to be handled by the ordinary schools.

(ii) Secondary and advanced - to be handled by the navy after the age of sixteen.[7]

The result was that with the division of education between the navy and the public school, the Britannia course was reduced, in most cases, to one year, between the ages of sixteen and seventeen. This was a weakness, but it was based upon the assumption, as agreed upon at the Headmaster's Conference of 1884, that the public schools would teach any course desired by the navy. This scheme failed because the public schools failed to implement their good intentions and hence they could not be relied upon by the fleet as a source for cadets.

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[7]Fisher opposed any separation and felt that the entire education process should be carried out under navy auspices.

APPENDIX II.

Speaking before the House of Lords on March 6, 1906, Lord Tweedmouth stressed the fact that the education scheme was new and the time for judging it was not yet ripe. The growing tree he felt should be preserved, and not pulled up to examine the roots!

He outlined the new scheme as follows:[1]

A. Osborne.

For a two year period. The academic work, averaging forty hours per week, was divided as follows:

(i) Twenty-four and three-quarter hours were spent on professional subjects, such as seamanship, navigation, practical engineering, mathematics, physics, and chemistry.

(ii) Fifteen and one-quarter hours were spent on general subjects.

B. Dartmouth.

For a two year period, following Osborne. Here, the academic week averaged forty-one and one-quarter hours.

(i) Twenty-eight hours on professional subjects.

(ii) Thirteen and one-quarter hours on general subjects.

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[1] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.153, 1906, 260-262.

Tweedmouth emphasized that at the end of these four years the boys were better educated than the average sixteen or seventeen year old leaving public school.

C. Six or seven months were to be spent on a cruiser where special subjects and general seamanship were studied.

D. Three years were spent afloat as a midshipman, followed by the sub-lieutenant examinations.

E. Two years as a sub-lieutenant (one of these on shore), followed by the lieutenant examinations.

Specializing was to take place only after passing to the rank of lieutenant and all those showing executive aptitude, whether or not they be engineers, would be given an opportunity to demonstrate such ability.

APPENDIX III.

The Selborne Scheme received some violent criticisms, but these came as no surprise to Fisher. Opinion was split in England, at least among those who thought they understood the new scheme well enough to criticize it, but continental opinion was also divided. The French apparently thought very highly of the scheme and adopted it en bloc,[1] while the Italian Minister of Marine, speaking before the Chamber of Deputies in Rome, thoroughly condemned the new system.[2] At home, Richmond had a falling out with Fisher largely owing to the latter's educational ideas.[3]

It was very easy to criticize this new system because it was such a radical departure from what had been known but the critics often overlooked the fact that there was agitation within the navy by the engineers, who sought some improvement in their status. Fisher realized that by 1903 the engineer was probably the most important person on a ship, yet he was still considered a 'greaser'. He also saw that the executive officers were drawn mainly from the upper classes and while he did not succeed in democratizing the service, he did extend

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[1] A.J. Marder, F.G.D.M., V.II, (Letter to Leyland - September 1907), 136.

[2] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.160, 1906, 500.

[3] A.J. Marder, Portrait of an Admiral, p. 18.

somewhat the opportunities for the attainment of executive rank. Fisher was able to draw, to some extent, upon historical precedent as far as his new training scheme was concerned, in that:

(i) He reverted to the old principle of a man having to 'sail his ship and fight it too'.

(ii) A similar experiment was being conducted in the United States' Navy.

(iii) During the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese granted executive rank to their engineer officers.[4]

Whatever critics thought of Fisher, to him went the credit for having "acted while others merely argued."[5]

Much of the criticism was based upon a complete misapprehension of Admiralty policy and many were of the opinion that the new system was designed to make a man an expert in many fields. This was not the case, but there was sufficient justifiable criticism that certain changes became inevitable. The major alterations to the Selborne Scheme of 1903 are as follows:

(i) 1906 - Marine Officers were to enter separately.

(ii) 1912 - The entry age into Osborne was raised to thirteen

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[4]F.T. Jane, The British Battle Fleet, V.II, 248.

[5]Ibid., V.II, 247.

and one-half so as to correspond with the age at which boys finished their preparatory school work.

(iii) 1913 - A supplementary scheme of entry to cope with the threatened shortage of officers was introduced. This consisted of a special entry for public school boys.[6]

(iv) 1925 - The engineer officers were dropped from the executive list.

(v) The minimum age for entry into Dartmouth was set at sixteen. Also free state education was adopted, and the course was reduced to two years.[7]

Fisher certainly did not approve of the changes that took place before his death. He felt that the idea of Osborne had been "emasculated by the schoolmasters of the nation".[8] However, in spite of these changes the fundamental principle of the scheme still holds good - viz. that all fighting seamen, excluding marine officers, must be well versed in mechanical apparatus.

Osborne was costly enough that it was restricted to those boys of well-to-do parents. The average costs were as

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[6] M. Lewis, The Navy of Britain, p. 255.

[7] Ibid., p. 286.

[8] Lord Fisher, Memories, p. 129.

follows:

COST PER CADET PER YEAR.[9]

(i) The state paid £98.

(ii) The parents paid £75, and provided pocket money, travelling expenses, and clothing.

(iii) In the case of sons of destitute Army and Navy officers, the charge was reduced to £40.

There were those who advocated a reduction, or as did Fisher, a complete removal of such fees, but this was refused in 1906,[10] and state education did not appear until 1947.

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[9] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.153, 1906, 601.

[10] Ibid., V.158, 1906, 272.

APPENDIX IV.

The Hartington Commission included the following:

1. Lord Hartington (later Duke of Devonshire), Chairman.
2. Lord Randolph Churchill.
3. Lord Revelstoke.
4. Admiral Sir F. Richards.
5. Sir R. Temple.
6. Major-General H. Brackenbury.
7. Mr. W.H. White.
8. Mr. H. Campbell-Bannerman.
9. Mr. T.H. Ismay.

SECRETARIES.

G.S. Clarke and Captain W.H. Hall, R.N., were appointed joint secretaries, but the latter was withdrawn for duty at sea and the Admiralty did not bother to replace him.[1]

The report of this commission was issued in two parts. The first part, issued in May, 1889, dealt with the relations between the War Office and the Admiralty, and the second part, issued in May, 1890, dealt with the internal administration of the War Office. The recommendations put forth in 1890 were as follows:

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[1]Lord Sydenham, My Working Life, p. 99.

(i) A defence council presided over by the Prime Minister should be set up. This would comprise both naval and military representatives, with provision for the inclusion of one or two officers of great reputation not, at the time, holding any appointment in the Admiralty or War Office.[2]

(ii) The Secretary of State for War should have an advisory committee, as the excessive centralization in the person of the C.-in-C. weakened the responsibility of the other heads.[3]

(iii) A War Office Council and the Office of the Chief of the Staff should be set up.[4]

These proposals foreshadow those of the Esher Commission, and had they been implemented in 1890 the chaos existing in the War Office at the time of the Boer War would have been avoided. Not all, however, Campbell-Bannerman included, approved of the abolition of the C.-in-C., and the Army was much opposed to the idea because it was,

> ... unwilling to part with that outward and visible sign of its own dignity and power, the Commander-in Chief, endeared to it by forty years of the genial and sympathetic command of H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.[5]

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[2] Ibid., p. 102. [3] Ibid., p. 102.

[4] Ibid., p. 103.

[5] J.B. Atlay, Lord Haliburton, p. 128.

APPENDIX V.

The report of the Esher Commission recommended the creation of a new Army Council which was to be presided over by the Secretary of State for War. Besides the Secretary of State this council was to contain four military and two civilian members. In January 1904 Fisher forwarded to Esher the names of the military personnel that he thought should sit on the Army Council. These were as follows:

(i) First Military Member (Chief of the General Staff), Sir John French.

(ii) Second Military Member (Adjutant-General), Sir H. Smith-Dorien.

(iii) Third Military Member (Quartermaster-General), General Plumer.[x]

(iv) Fourth Military Member General F.G. Slade.

Fisher also suggested the following names to be considered for other military appointments.

(i) Inspector-General of the Forces - Duke of Connaught.[x]

(ii) The 'elder statesman' of the C.I.D. - Lord Roberts.[x]

(iii) Commander in Ireland in place of the Duke of Connaught -- Lord Grenfell.[x]

(iv) Commander of the First Army Corps in place of French -- Sir T. Kelly-Kenny.

(v) Military Member of The Council in India - Sir W. Nicholson.

(vi) Second Army Corps (as of October 1904 following the retirement of Sir Evelyn Wood) - Sir Ian Hamilton.[x]

(vii) Commander at Portsmouth - Major General R.B. Lane.

Of those proposed by Fisher, only the ones marked (x) were eventually appointed.

APPENDIX VI.

A Defence Committee of the Cabinet had been established by Lord Salisbury in 1895, but this proved to be ineffective. In November, 1902, a new defence committee came into existence which was to provide a foundation for the reforms which were later suggested by the report of the Esher Commission. The first meeting of the new defence committee was held on December 18, 1902, and the participants were as follows.

I. NAVAL MEMBERS.

(i) Lord Selborne.

(ii) Lord Walter Kerr.

(iii) Prince Louis of Battenberg.

II. MILITARY MEMBERS.

(i) St. John Brodrick.

(ii) Lord Roberts.

(iii) General Sir William Nicholson.

This committee was under the presidency of the Duke of Devonshire (who had presided over the old Defence Committee of the Cabinet) until his resignation from the Government in 1903, whereupon he was succeeded by Balfour.

On March 5, 1903, Balfour announced that the permanent membership of the defence committee would include.

(i) Lord President of the Council

(ii) Prime Minister

(iii) Secretary of State for War.

(iv) First Lord of the Admiralty.

(v) First Sea Lord.

(vi) C.-in-C.

(vii) Director of Naval Intelligence.

(viii) Director of Military Intelligence.

(ix) Other persons who could be called upon for advice, notably the Secretary of State for India and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.[1]

On May 4, 1904, on the basis of the Esher report, the C.I.D. was formally established, and the Prime Minister was to be the chairman and the only permanent member. By late 1905 the 'permanent' attendants were:

(i) Secretary of State for War.

(ii) First Lord of the Admiralty.

(iii) Secretary of State for India.

(iv) Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The professional members usually summoned were:

(i) Lord Roberts.

(ii) First Sea Lord.

(iii) Chief of the General Staff.

(iv) Director of Naval Intelligence.

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[1]C.B. Funstall, unpublished notes.

plus: any other available experts.[2]

The purpose of the C.I.D. was to bridge the gap "between expert knowledge and ministerial responsibility."[3] This organization was a vital development because it was indicative of the responsibility which had now to be assumed by the Prime Minister. On the basis of the Esher Report the C.I.D. was given a permanent secretariat; the first secretary being Sir G.S. Clarke, followed in 1907 by Sir Charles Ottley and in 1912 by Col. Hankey.

The C.I.D. was a purely advisory and consultative body and had NO executive authority of any kind. It was, as Hankey said, strictly "a co-ordinating body for interdepartmental matters relative to defence. The Secretariat provides an organizing centre and permanent facilities for conference and record".[4]

The C.I.D. was a very successful organization owing to its:

(i) prestige and comprehensiveness.

(ii) regular attendance of the Prime Minister.

(iii) starting work done by Clarke.[5]

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[2]Lord Sydenhan, My Working Life, p. 177.

[3]B.F.C. Dugdale, A.J. Balfour, p. 370.

[4]Lord Hankey, Diplomacy by Conference, p. 13. See also: p. 84 and W.I. Jennings, Cabinet Government, p. 229 f.

[5]C.B. Tunstall, unpublished notes.

However it had one major fault in not being 'imperial' enough. Representatives of the Dominions were lacking and it was not until 1912 that Sir Robert Borden, Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, had power to attend the C.I.D. meetings when requested.

APPENDIX VII.

The Board of Admiralty is the Office of Lord High Admiral exercised by Lords Commissioners, appointed by Order-in-Council The reorganization of the Admiralty as undertaken by Fisher was approved in principle, but final approval, given by an Order-in-Council, November 5, 1929, outlined the Board of Admiralty as follows.

I. CIVIL AUTHORITY.

(i) First Lord - he has the responsibility for ALL decisions and can, therefore, overrule the Board.

II. NAVAL REPRESENTATIVE.

(i) First Sea Lord - the technical head of the navy and Chief of the Naval General Staff.[1]

(ii) Second Sea Lord - Director of Naval Personnel.

(iii) Third Sea Lord - Controller of the Navy.

(iv) Fourth Sea Lord - Chief of Supplies and Transports.

III. DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF.

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[1]In this case question of tactics and strategy are handled by the Naval General Staff, whereas, since no such body existed during Fisher's tenure at the Admiralty, these were left to the First Sea Lord.

IV. JUNIOR MINISTERS (MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT).

(i) Parliamentary and Financial Secretary.

(ii) Civil Lord.

V. CIVIL SERVANT.

(i) Permanent Secretary.

The Board of Admiralty also controls:

(i) Three Royal Observatories.

(ii) H.M. Nautical Almanac Office.

APPENDIX VIII.

The following table shows the increases in the Navy Estimates 1901 to 1905, after which time there were reductions owing to Fisher's economy programme. The figures for the years 1903 to 1905 are estimates only.

BRITISH NAVAL EXPENDITURE.[1]

(Including Supplementary Votes and Naval Works)[2]

Year	Vote	Naval Works	Total
1901 to 1902	£30,981,315[x]	£ 2,745,176[x]	£33,726,491[x]
1902 to 1903	31,003,977[x]	3,198,016[x]	34,201,944[x]
1903 to 1904	35,727,500	3,493,500	39,221,000
1904 to 1905	36,889,500	5,111,900	42,001,400

(x) indicates that the figures for shillings and pence hace been omitted.

The amount spent by Britain on new construction over the period 1895 to 1904 as compared with continental countries, is as follows.[3]

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[1] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.130, 1904, 1214.

[2] Naval Works - For the construction of projects, apart from shipbuilding, funds might be borrowed from the Government with the debt to be retired by a certain amount each succeeding year.

[3] P.D. - 4 Ser. - V.132, 1904, 230.

(i) Britain - £69,981,078 - actual figures and include the cost of gun mounting.

(ii) France - 32,499,491)

(iii) Russia - 28,667,102) information taken from the

(iv) Germany - 22,153,247) Estimates.

APPENDIX IX.

By 1914 Britain was very short of destroyers for fleet coverage, owing to Fisher's policy of scrapping and his concentration upon the building of battleships and battle-cruisers to the almost total exclusion of smaller vessels (destroyers and light cruisers).[1] In this respect Germany was much better prepared for World War I as the following figures indicate.

DESTROYERS.

		Number	Speed (Knots).
(i) Germany:			
	a. Modern types	96	30) All were fit for
	b. Smaller types	48	26-30) sea-work.
(ii) Britain:			
	a. Modern types	76 (40 with the Grand Fleet; 36 at Harwich)	33 were good for only 27 knots.
	b. 'Tribal Class'	11 stationed at Dover and used in southern waters owing to their small fuel capacity	
	c. Old Types	25	25 knots.

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[1]See: Lord Jellicoe, The Grand Fleet, p. 29 f.

APPENDIX X.

The Designs Committee announced by Fisher in November, 1904, was appointed on December 22 of the same year. The Committee, under the presidency of Fisher, contained the following:[1]

I. NAVAL OFFICERS.

(i) Rear-Admiral H.S.H. Prince Louis of Battenberg, D.N.I.

(ii) Engineer Rear-Admiral Sir John Durston, Engineer-in-Chief of the Fleet.

(iii) Rear-Admiral A.L. Winsloe, Commanding Torpedo and Submarine Flotillas.

(iv) Captain H.B. Jackson, F.R.S., about to assume the office of Controller of the Navy.

(v) Captain J.R. Jellicoe, about to assume the office of Director of Naval Ordnance.

(vi) Captain R.H.S. Bacon, Naval Assistant to the First Sea Lord.

(vii) Captain C.E. Madden, about to assume the office of Naval Assistant to the Controller of the Navy.

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[1]R.H. Bacon, Lord Fisher, V.I, 257.
See also: E.L. Woodward, Great Britain and The German Navy, pp. 107-108.

II. CIVILIAN MEMBERS.

(i) Philip Watts, Esq., LL.D., D.Sc., F.R.S., Director of Naval Construction.

(ii) The Right Honourable the Lord Kelvin.

(iii) Professor J.B. Biles, LL.D. Glasgow University.

(iv) Sir John Thornycroft, F.R.S., D.C.L.

(v) Alexander Gracie, Esq., Fairfield Shipbuilding Company.

(vi) R.E. Froude, Esq., F.R.S., Superintendent of the Admiralty Experimental Works at Haslar.

(vii) W.H. Gard, Esq., Chief Constructor of the Portsmouth Dockyard.

APPENDIX XI.

SUBMARINES.

These boats were of little value until the introduction of the periscope, which came to be utilized shortly after the turn of the twentieth century.

The following table indicates the development of the British submarine service.[1]

Estimates	Tons (Submerged).
1901 to 1902 - 'Holland' Type - 5 ordered	120.
(i) 'A' Class developed 13 ordered	207
'A' 1-4 - a 12 cylinder surface motor - 450 H.P.	
5-13- a 16 cylinder surface motor - 550 H.P.	
(ii) 1904 - A1 - lost off Spithead after being rammed by a merchant ship.	
(iii) 1912 - A3 - lost off Spithead after being rammed.	
1904 to 1905 - 'B' Class 11 ordered	313.
(i) B1 was originally known as A 14.	
(ii) Surface speed was increased from 11½ to 13 knots.	

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[1] F.T. Jane, The British Battle Fleet, V.II, 210-211.

Estimates Tons (Submerged).

1906 and later - 'C' Class 38 ordered

similar to 'B' Class.

(i) C11 - lost at sea following a collision.

1907 - 'D' Class 600

(i) The original of this class was not a success but the others were.

(ii) These vessels had:

a. torpedo tubes - 3 (instead of 2).

b. surface speed - 16 knots.

c. wireless (experimenting)

By the end of 1911 - 8 'D' Class had been launched out of an intended 19, and then the 'E' Class was developed.

'E' Class 800

a. torpedo tubes - 4

b. wireless

c. fitted with guns (the D4 was the first to mount a gun).

Britain remained very short of submarines. Germany, by 1914, had 28 submarines of the 'U' Class, all of which were sea-worthy, while Britain had,[2]

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[2]Lord Jellicoe, The Grand Fleet, p. 11.

(i) 'C' Class - not fit for oversea work.

(ii) 'D' and 'E' Class - used for operations in enemy waters. These totalled 17 in number, consisting of 8 'D' Class and 9 'E' Class.

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